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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

# CRITERIA FOR AUTONOMY IN SPORT PARTICIPATION

BY

DENNIS R. NIGHSWONGER

(C)

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
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ABSTRACT

This study is an exercise in applied philosophy involving analysis of the issue of individual autonomy in sport and a response to criteria which have been proposed to deal with the issue. The issue is introduced as a conflict between liberty and authority. A liberty perspective is suggested as more appropriate to both participation and analysis. Appeals to responsibility and authority to resolve the issue are said to derive from a misperception of the nature and locus of performance responsibility via confusion of responsibility and accountability. Informed consent, may be an effective methodological technique to begin correcting current deficiencies, however, it is, by itself, insufficient to resolve the issue. A re-assessment of the concept of autonomy is offered via three conceptual categories given as philosophical, psychological, and political. A more comprehensive criteria are proposed for the individual person, the environment, and the specific task in which the person is engaged. Discussion of application of proposed criteria focuses on involvement and influence of a coach. A system of declining constraints is suggested as an appropriate method for correcting deficiency conditions. It is suggested that attending to the development of individual people through a more comprehensive conception of autonomy can help make sport a more meaningful and appropriate activity toward the pursuit of both individual and social excellence.

## Preface

Barrows Dunham begins the preface of his survey of the political history of philosophy, entitled Heroes and Heretics with the following statement:

"One of the things a man has to do in life is to discover, so far as he can, the grounds for believing what he is asked to believe. Reason, of course, bids him believe all those assertions, and only those assertions, that seem likely to be true. Yet, so soon as he tries faithfully to follow reason, he grows aware of other grounds, or at least of pressures, which derive from the organized society around him. That is to say, he finds himself enticed or driven into beliefs he would not otherwise have held."1

I offer this as an appropriate introduction to this paper as it indicates the critical approach I have chosen in such an attempt to discover those grounds for believing what I have been asked over the years to believe about sport.

---

1 Dunham, B. Heroes and Heretics, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967, P. vii.

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# Chapter 1

## Analysis and the Issue of Autonomy in Sport

### Introduction

Students of physical education and coaching have been encouraged, in recent years, to justify skill drills and technical procedures according to scientific principles of physiology and biomechanics according to the best knowledge available on the subject. It seems that they have not been encouraged to do the same with philosophical aspects of sport and coaching activity. Therefore, there is little information available on this subject. There may be many reasons for this situation, however, it also may be useful to consider some possibilities. Some may think that a lack of information indicates a lack of need or, perhaps, that such philosophic attention is not possible without relevant information being available. The organization and operation of sport and physical education has evolved as a socially integrated phenomenon. It is not something that occurs distinctly apart from everyday social influence as might be the case with, for example, experiments being conducted in a laboratory somewhere. It is apparently commonly assumed, then, that the form in which the phenomena of sport and physical education occurs is the best one possible. Further, all the ideals and basic philosophical foundations upon which society is currently based are assumed to be incorporated within that form as a matter of course. Philosophical analysis, especially involving

questions of justification, then, may have been thought to present not only an impractical, even unnecessary activity, but further, one which would be disruptive to an accepted order of social development and operation. What I take to be the 'sport' approach to philosophic activity at least through the first half of the 1900's is illustrated by the following comment describing an interview with a major sport personality of the time:

"I soon found, not surprisingly, that Halas had no ready response to questions about his underlying philosophy. Like a great many other doers, men dedicated to activity, he probably had seldom taken time to ask himself, "Where am I going? What do I want from life?" Busyness, along with the doing that went with it was its own reward and who is to say it was not a worthwhile ethic?"1

In addition, this position has apparently been supported by a lack of attention to sport by philosophers until recent years. Paul Weiss, in one of the first major contemporary works of this kind notes:

"We will find in the Greeks some good historically grounded explanations for the neglect of sport by philosophic minds, then and later. Despite their evident enjoyment of athletics, and their delight in speculating on the meaning of a hundred different human concerns, the Greek thinkers never dealt extensively with the nature, import, and reason for sport. Since Plato and his fellows formulated most of the issues that have occupied philosophers over the centuries, the Greek failure to provide a philosophical study became a norm for the rest."2

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1Cope, M. The Game That Was. New York: World Publishing, 1970, P. 277.

2Weiss, P. Sport: A Philosophic Inquiry. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969, P. 5.

The Issue and Analysis Perspective

Times and views, however, are changing. Since Weiss' book in 1969 there have been many attempts to address philosophical issues of general concern in our society as they occur 'within the context' of sport.3 One of those issues has been autonomy of individual persons. Recent papers have addressed this issue by proposing criteria by which we might ensure that autonomy of individual athletes is sufficiently included in organization and operation of sport activity. However, these proposals seem to be limited as their discussions revolve around a particular conception of autonomy which, I think, is not as comprehensive as a complete consideration of individual autonomy requires.

What these articles offer is an attempt to justify a coach's authority to give directives to athletes within an operative model based on paternalism. The proposed criteria for athlete autonomy is that of 'informed consent' based on the current 'medical-model' of that process. As a preliminary response, there appears to be at least a prima facie incompatibility in attempting simultaneous implementation of individual autonomy and paternalistic authority. Further, an appeal to the medical-model of informed consent procedures requires acceptance of certain assumptions which, in my view, have not been clearly stated

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3The Philosophic Society for the Study of Sport and accompanying Journal of the Philosophy of Sport were established in 1971.

nor justified in themselves.[4] In addition, the aspect of information is discussed in some detail while the other two aspects of that model, competence and voluntariness, are largely ignored. Moreover, these articles proposing criteria do not, in my view, deal sufficiently with the concept of autonomy itself, or various conceptions of it, prior to transferring their conclusions to the context of sport. That is, it is not clear what is meant by the term autonomy, nor is it clear why we should be concerned with it, especially in sport. There is, further, little consideration of whether it is possible for expression of autonomy to actually occur. To compound the difficulty, the issue is addressed from a perspective which lies external to the individual participant, the person with whom we are supposedly concerned.

In order to help clarify this point of analysis perspective, I turn to Patrick Devlin's comments on John Stuart Mill's attempts: "to resolve the struggle between liberty and authority that is inherent in every society."[5] For further clarity, I offer the remainder of this particular paragraph in full. He states:

> "We who belong to the societies of the United States or of the British Commonwealth or of other like-minded peoples say that we belong to a free society. By this I think we mean no

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[4]This involves views as to the nature of 'persons' and subsequently how they ought to be treated based on those views.

[5]Devlin, P. The Enforcement of Morals. New York: Oxford University Press, 1965, P. 102.

more than that we strike a balance in favour of individual freedom. The law is the boundary that marks the limit of authority and it is not drawn in a straight line. As it traverses the field of human activities it inclines from side to side in some allowing much more freedom than in others. At each point we try to strike the right balance. What I mean by striking it in favour of freedom is that the question to be asked in each case is: 'How much authority is necessary?' and not: 'How much liberty is to be conceded?' That the question should be put in that form, that authority should be a grant and liberty not a privilege, is, I think, the true mark of a free society."6

Therefore, what I intend to offer is an exercise in applied philosophy involving a)analysis of the issue of individual autonomy as it occurs 'within the context' of sport and b)a response to criteria which have been proposed to deal with the issue. The specific purpose of this paper, then, is to elaborate on those aspects of autonomy, the concept, value, and possibility, in relation to an individual's participation in sport. This discussion attempts to approach the question of autonomy from the perspective of the individual which will provide the basis for a similar athlete centered criteria for athlete autonomy in sport.

Definitions

The nature of this study precludes statement of restrictive operational definitions. However, some initial clarification of the meaning of autonomy, responsibility, and authority, the three major concepts to be discussed, is required. Autonomy may be initially defined as self-rule.7

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6Devlin, P. P. 102
7 Angeles, P. P. 22; Haworth, L. P. 11.

In effect, this notion entails an individual deciding which actions to do or not do including simple movements and complex conceptual decisions.

Responsibility is a more confusing term as it has been used in ways which appear interchangable while having distinctive differences in meaning. Responsibility has been used to refer to causal relations as in stating that something or someone is responsible for the occurrence of an event. Also, responsibility has been used to refer to moral or legal culpability of someone in relation to the occurrence of some event. This study addresses the confusion and need for making appropriate distinctions in both analysis and everyday use of the term.

Authority is a term which also appears to have several commonly interchangable uses involving one person giving directives to another or others such that those receiving directives are expected to comply. Authority has been used to refer to one's ability to direct the actions of others as well as the appropriateness of exercising that ability. Again, this study is concerned with discovering and making appropriate distinctions.

Gender Considerations

There is increasing contemporary concern for attending to differences in gender perception and application. I do consider such concerns to be legitimate and recognize a potential bias, however unconscious or unintentional, in my

own analysis. However, it should be noted that any such bias is unintentional and efforts have been made to avoid such influences in this study. Also, in consideration of a person existing, acting, and who ought to be treated in certain ways, I do not generally consider the gender distinction of major importance to my arguments, conclusions, or overall positions. That is, a person ought to act or be treated in certain ways regardless of gender, where it can be demonstrated that choice of action is possible and not precluded by some unavoidable condition.

Foundations of Critique and Criteria

The basis for my overall critique of conceptions and proposed criteria for autonomy is to be found in a recent work by Lawrence Haworth entitled Autonomy: An Essay in Philosophical Psychology and Ethics.[8] In his book, Haworth describes a developmental model of personal autonomy which not only is a more comprehensive consideration of autonomy, but also appears to be consistent with commonly claimed educational or personal development goals of sport activity such as decision-making ability, competence in action, and character development.

In this model, Haworth describes three stages of individual development labeled as minimal autonomy, normal autonomy, and ideal autonomy. Minimal autonomy consists of

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[8]Haworth, L. Autonomy: An Essay in Philosophical Psychology and Ethics, New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1986.

simple agency; a capacity for intentional action and a sense of self.9 Normal autonomy as a progression of minimal autonomy, through a developed capacity for critical reasoning, consists of three components; competence, procedural independence, and self-control. Competence refers to both competency as an agent in the form of a repertoire of physical skills and reasoning skills as critical competence. Procedural independence refers to the process of an individual making an action decision regardless of the specific content of that decision. That is, the individual decides what to do rather than someone else telling them what to do or deciding for them. Self-control refers to the individual's ability to control one's inner impulses. Ideal autonomy refers to a condition of unrestricted critical competence.

A major contribution of this model in critique of conceptions of autonomy lies in the fact that: "Haworth departs from other recent discussions of autonomy in not giving greater attention to the troubling criteria of procedural independence."10

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9Christman, J.P. (Review of Haworth, L., Autonomy: An Essay in Philosophical Psychology and Ethics), Ethics, 98, October 1987, P. 166.
10Christman, J.P. P. 166.

Arguments Against Autonomy

Several arguments against autonomy have been offered which include the following. Autonomy leads to anarchy which is contrary to proper social order. Autonomy is an outmoded value.11 There is a danger in autonomy of irrational over-reliance on oneself due to a misperception of one's abilities as well as a danger of development and promotion of selfishness.12 Autonomy in sport is contrary to efficient and effective means of meeting the demands of performance in competition.13 Autonomy as self-direction, beyond initial decision to participate and comply with directives of a coach, is not a major goal of sport participants.14 Further, allowance for a multiplicity of individual decision-making would not be conducive to provision or occurrence of a particular opportunity. One could not participate in a particular sport without the specific rules for that sport and subsequently could not acquire the benefits of participation without some additional regulation by others.

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11Veatch, R. M. "Is Autonomy An Outmoded Value?," The Hastings Center Report, October 1984, Pp. 38-40.

12Benson, J. "Who Is the Autonomous Man," Philosophy 58, 1983, Pp. 6-7.

13Thomas, Carolyn E. "Criteria for Athlete Autonomy in a Paternalistic Sport Model," in Ross, S. and Charette, L. (eds) Persons, Minds and Bodies, North York, Ontario: University Press of Canada, 1988, Pp. 191-202.

14Feinberg, J. Social Philosophy, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Pentice-Hall, 1973, P. 15.

Response to Arguments Against Autonomy

In general, objections result from a misconception or misapplication of notions of autonomy to individuals in the same way those notions have been applied to political states via discussions of freedom. This has involved discussion of freedom as procedural independence combined with a materialist scientific orientation including notions that inner psychological factors of individual persons are irrelevant to the issue of freedom in this sense. However, what we need is a separation of ideas of freedom and autonomy and an interpretation of the meaning of autonomy from a liberty perspective rather than from an authority perspective. The inner psychological factors of individual persons are important to a more comprehensive consideration of autonomy.15 If one interprets an anarchistic principle as described by Feinberg16 from an authority perspective, or according to an ethic of rights, as is common, those objections noted appear to have some force. However, if we interpret the same anarchistic principle from a liberty perspective, or according to an ethic of responsibility, which is also consistent with notions of personal responsibility, then the force of those objections is, I

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15Taylor, C. "What's Wrong With Negative Liberty," in Philosophy and the Human Sciences, Philosophical Papers 2, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, Ch. 8, Pp. 211-229, P. 212.

16Feinberg, J. Social Philosophy, Pp. 22-25.

believe, substantially diminished.17

More specific to sport, a prevalent operative model of competitive sport which is based on notions of paternalism and an authority perspective to the meaning of freedom, and subsequently to autonomy, is a further misconception or misapplication of notions of freedom and autonomy to individuals engaged in a particular activity. I believe this application to be inconsistent with both the essence of the activity which has been referred to as the spirit of play18 and with the basic tenets of a free society.

Organization of the Paper

Chapter one, then, has introduced the issue in terms of a conflict between individual liberty and authority of others. Chapter two provides a response to appeals to responsibility and authority which have been proposed to resolve this conflict in sport. Chapter three offers a re-assessment of the concept of autonomy and its relation to an athlete's participation in sport. This is proposed as a necessary precursor to developing a more appropriate and comprehensive criteria for assessing conditions of

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17This misperception of the value and role of idividual autonomy in social relations viewed from either perspective is discussed in terms similar to my own view by Daniel Callahan "Autonomy: A Moral Good, Not A Moral Obsession," The Hastings Center Report, October 1984, Pp. 40-42.

18This is in reference to Huizinga's thesis of Homo Ludens that play is the essential element of culture. Also, this has been noted more recently in study of literature by Messenger, C. K. Sport and the Spirit of Play in American Fiction, New York: Columbia University Press, 1981.

autonomous participation in sport. Chapter four offers a response to appeals to 'informed consent' which has been proposed by others as one methodological technique of resolving the conflict between autonomy and authority in sport. Chapter five offers a specific proposal of criteria for autonomy in sport participation according to categorical distinctions of the person, the task, and the environment. Chapter six investigates means by which proposed criteria may be applied toward development of autonomous conditions of sport while focusing on involvement and influence of a coach in one's sport participation.

## Chapter 2

## Appeals to Responsibility and Authority[19]

### Introduction

Coaches give directives to athletes and expect them to obey. Coaches commonly assume an obligation to tell athletes what to do while also assuming that those athletes have a concurrent obligation to do what the coach tells them, for the most part, without question. The problem in this situation has derived from a conflict between claims of an individual's right to choose and claimed rights of society to protect itself along with a subsequent assumed obligation to protect the individuals themselves. However, as Thomas tells us: "Such efforts to constrain the professional relationship come not from having met beneficent obligations but from abuses of power in the name of science, medicine, education, or in meeting professional obligations."[20] Attempts to resolve the conflict between assumed obligations of authority figures and claims of individual rights have focused on authority of those giving directives rather than on obligations of either side. Thomas notes further the roots of this conflict which was, although somewhat delayed relative to consideration of such issues in the remainder of society, eventually applied to sport. "Coupled with

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[19]The material in this chapter has been published under the title "Responsibility and Authority in Coaching Philosophy," in Galasso, P. J.(Ed), Philosophy of Sport and Physical Activity, Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 1988, Pp. 277-290.

[20]Thomas, C., P. 196.

distrust of authority, existentialism as a post-war philosophical movement stressed personal development and individual ethical responsibility."21 Sport as an institution appears to have resisted this notion of individual responsibility. Athletes may be thought to be responsible for their performance, but a closer look at the meaning of responsibility and its relation to the prevalent operative model of sport participation and regulation reveals the questionable nature of such an assumption. Although the nature of obligations assumed by coaches are vague,22 clarification has not been sufficiently addressed. Rather, an appeal to a coach's responsibility has been the starting point for attempting to justify authority exercised by a coach. This chapter, then, offers a response to appeals to both responsibility and authority commonly used in attempts to justify directives given to athletes by coaches.

Responsibility

This section investigates the nature and source of responsibility as discussed in attempts to justify authority exercised or appealed to by a coach. More specifically, the purpose of this section is to begin to develop a justification of coaching activity in the form of a first principle for development of a consistent philosophical approach to coaching in sport. Is a coach responsible before or after acquisition of authority? In my view, authority

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21Thomas, C., P. 195.
22Thomas, C., P. 196.

could be more appropriately justified if it follows upon acquisition of certain specific responsibilities. Further, I suggest that every coach does, in fact, exercise whatever authority they might possess on the basis of a, conscious or unconscious, philosophical stand on responsibility. Also, given that there are often sanctions, applied to both the athlete and the coach, for faulty performances, the question of who is actually responsible for the athlete's performance is of additional importance.

Responsibility is largely an ethical concept. It involves the obligation to act or not to act; first, as a moral obligation to choose appropriate acts; second, as a legal obligation to act in certain ways considered appropriate by the whole of a society; third, as a political obligation, in management or participation in organizations, to act in accordance with directives of other individuals. Such obligations must, of course, necessarily presuppose the individual person's capacity for choice. That is, a person may be obligated to act or not act but he may actually do that which he is not obligated to do. Determining the locus of responsibility, that is 'who is responsible', is to determine the origin or source of a particular act. Any normal individual has the ability to respond to many, if not most, aspects of at least the immediate environment by choosing one action over another. This is personal response ability. It may help to think of the meaning of the word responsibility in terms of the

ability to respond.23 That is, human action is not merely a reflex response. Rather, action is the result of what the person intends to do. Personal responsibility, then, is the origin of human action because of the individual capacity to choose among alternative acts.

Personal responsibility cannot be easily denied although theories of behaviorists have attempted to do so.24 In fact, personal responsibility is used to determine the locus of other types of responsibility as mentioned above. Ethically, establishing an obligation is meaningless if we do not know 'who' is obligated. Legal responsibility is determined on the basis of 'who' is responsible. In systems of management, responsibility also depends on establishing who is or was obligated or authorized to act. This is the point at which responsibility and accountability are frequently confused. Accountability is a consideration of actions which some person is expected to perform as well as punishment for that person if those actions are not performed. Responsibility, more correctly, involves a determination of who decided which actions to perform. A person is accountable if he/she is expected, by others, to perform certain actions. That person is responsible for

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23Herman, D. J. "Mechanism and the Athlete," Journal of the Philosophy of Sport, Vol. 2, Sept. 1975, 102-110.

24Buck, L.A. Autonomy Psychotherapy: Authoritarian Control Versus Individual Choice, North Quincy, Mass: The Christopher Publishing House, 1979, Ch. 2, Pp. 25-40.

those actions which he actually intends and initiates. This suggests that a person may be both responsible and accountable at the same time in one situation while he may be responsible and not accountable in another. A person may also be, in some situations, accountable while not being actually responsible.

The management concept of responsibility is concerned with obligation to give directives and an obligation to obey directives. Major characteristics of management responsibility that should be noted include the following. There is a difficulty in separating authority from responsibility. There is also a need to distinguish between responsibility and accountability. Further, it is useful to consider the nature of directives from a 'position' of authority regardless of any specific person occupying the position.

Further, the existence and appropriateness of personal responsibility has been challenged by these organizational systems. This challenge has been referred to by some as a crisis of responsibility.25 In some organizational systems: "[persons] are not conceived of as entities endowed with the ontological capacity for producing action..."26 Any

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25Horosz, W. The Crisis of Responsibility, Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1975, Pp. vii-xiii; Ch. 13 Pp. 310-321; Pp. 209-210.

26Pols, E. The Acts of Our Being, Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1982, Ch. 1 Pp. 6-23; Ch. 2 Pp. 24-58; P. 8.

organization which uses a command system of management, as do military organizations, operates according to this view.

Determination of responsibility, as origin of action, is more appropriately derived from an agent who acts, a person who freely initiates that action. However, responsibility is commonly assigned, or ascribed, to a person who is perceived to be an agent of an action, regardless of whether that person actually performed a particular act. Now, responsibility is assigned to an agent of action by evaluation of that action. An action can be properly evaluated, by persons other than the agent of the act, only if that action is goal-oriented and that goal is commonly known. However, it is frequently difficult, if not impossible, to determine the goal of actions of individual persons. Therefore, actions of persons are commonly explained by ascriptive responsibility and not by any causal description which refers to the intent or goal, of the individual person who initiated the action. In the use of ascriptive responsibility consideration of the individual, particular self is insignificant in an analysis or explanation of acts, such that noting the occurrence of a rational act and accepting the origin of that act as that of an individual person makes no meaningful contribution to that explanation.27 That is, in evaluation, we consider only who performed the action and do not consider his/her reasons for having done so. In this way, attention in evaluation of

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27Pols, E. P. 53.

actions in social or organizational relationships, is shifted toward rule-following behavior away from consideration of the intent of the person who performed, or initiated, the action. Evaluation of action, then, occurs largely according to legal rules or laws. As such, persons are viewed more as being responsible, or rather, accountable, to the society as a whole. To be accountable, then, is to be subject to punishment for non-compliance of established rules. Through this attention shift evaluation of social conduct becomes based on accountability as liability to punishment or sanctions for failure to comply with social/legal rules. The athlete, then, as a person, would not be viewed as significant in explaining the origin of his/her own performance. That is, any intention the athlete might have regarding his/her manner of performance does not help explain why he/she performs in the manner he/she actually does. The athlete appears as only a minor character in the whole of his/her own performance.

If personal intentions in determination of responsibility are thought to be insignificant, how then do we ascribe responsibility? Joel Feinberg28 describes two major aspects of ascriptive responsibility as authorship and liability.

Ascription of responsibility according to authorship

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28Feinberg, J. "Action and Responsibility," in White, Alan R.(ed), The Philosophy of Action. New York: Oxford University Press, 1968, Pp. 95-119.

involves reference to that person or persons with whom the action originated. However, as responsibility is commonly ascribed according to expected behavior and emphasis on the specific action itself, the concept of ascriptive responsibility also emphasizes performance. That is, the question of who performed the act is emphasized rather than who actually initiated the act. Authorship, then, refers to causal agency. Each athlete may be appropriately considered the causal agent of their individual performance. As such, each is responsible by authorship.

Ascription of responsibility according to liability refers to an ascription: "either to the agent or to someone else, liability under a set of rules or customs to some further response for it."29 Feinberg notes further, that ascriptions of causal responsibility are frequently confused with ascriptions of causal agency. Feinberg states: "ascriptions of liability can be transferable, vicarious, or..independent of actual fault."30 Someone may, by some set of rules, be punished for an act he/she did not directly perform. For example, executives in organizations are reprimanded for faulty performances of their subordinates although the executives do not perform, or fail to perform those particular acts. And yet, we should note, as Feinberg does, that: "the most usual reason for holding a person

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29Feinberg, J. P. 107.
30Feinberg, J. P. 108

liable for an action is that he performed it."31 In context, the coach is not a direct causal agent of the athlete's performance but is commonly ascribed causal responsibility for that performance. The coach is thought to be responsible for the outcome of the athlete's efforts in performance even though he/she does not participate directly in that performance.

The notion of ascriptive responsibility is such that someone is given or assigned the status of being responsible for an action and its consequences. It is important to note, then, that ascription is to a large degree discretionary.32 The next obvious problem is that of who's disrcetion is to apply. The answer is relatively simple. Discretion in decision making is exercised by persons in 'positions' of authority. As the following quote from R.B. Perry illustrates quite effectively: "It is a well known fact that we describe as the cause of an event that particular condition by which we hope to control it."33 This seems to be the case with ascriptive responsibility as it applies to the sport coach. Responsibility is ascribed to persons in 'positions' that enable them to control the actions of others, at least to some degree. Now, although the athlete is the direct causal agent of his/her performance, causal responsibility for the athlete's performance is frequently, if not always, ascribed to the athlete's coach. This

31Feinberg, J. P. 108.
32Feinberg, J. P. 111.
33Feinberg, J. P. 113.

ascription follows upon establishment of the coach in a position of authority for the purpose of controlling the athlete's performance outcome. This is an important point as we can now see that ascription of responsibility commonly follows allocation of authority and not the reverse as some might suggest.

Coaching is an interventive activity engaged in for the purpose of enhancing an athlete's performance in competition. The term 'performance' implies expectation of specific behavior or action. That is, a specific behavior or action is expected to be executed according to established, well-known rules that govern or guide that particular type of performance. It is further expected, or assumed, that the athlete's intent, if considered at all, is actually in accord with those rules. The coach, by virtue of the purpose of his/her activity, acquires a position of influence over the athlete in a manner which most effectively facilitates the coach's control over that performance outcome. The coach is subsequently subject to punishment if he/she fails, or rather if the athlete fails. Thus, a coach acquires or exercises some authority in order to fulfill the purpose of coaching activity.

Authority

This section investigates the nature and source of authority as discussed in attempts to justify directives given to athletes by coaches. As I suggested earlier, there

seems to be at least a prima facie incompatibility in attempting simultaneous implementation of individual autonomy and paternalistic authority. This is significant here for two reasons. First, the common model of sport organization and operation is generally considered to be paternalistic. Second, the criteria proposals noted earlier have advocated the use of informed consent to counter the effects of paternalism in sport.

Most of us adhere to claims of the value of individual freedom in choice of action, especially as we are said to live in a "free and democratic society". At the same time many of us advocate participation in organized sport activity which, by its very nature, seems to require that individuals must give up their claims to freedom in order to participate. By placing authority for decision making in the hands of another, the coach, it is thought that the athlete will receive desired benefits that could not otherwise be acquired.

Some authors have questioned the legitimacy of a coach's authority in this regard.34 These authors refer to the role of the coach in relation to an individual's pursuit of athletic excellence. The problem seems to be as Ravizza and Daruty state: "Conduct that some would deem necessary to the achievement of athletic excellence may be regarded by

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34Ravizza, K. and Daruty, K. "Paternalism and Sovereignty in Athletics, Limits and Justifications of the Coach's Exercise of Authority Over the Adult Athlete," Journal of the Philosophy of Sport, 11, 1985, Pp. 71-82.

others as unjustified coercion."35 These authors and others proceed to attempt to provide means of justifying a coach's authority by way of appeal to a coach's responsibility in the coaching situation. However, it seems that they do so without sufficient attention to the two major elements of the problem which exist a priori to the actual coaching situation. First, is the actual role of a coach in an individual's pursuit of athletic excellence. I think this statement itself should be more appropriately stated in regard to an individual's participation in sport. This consideration should not be limited to what is referred to as the pursuit of athletic excellence. Second, is the necessity of that, or any, role of a coach in that regard.

I suggest that we cannot begin to formulate a meaningful response to demands for justification of coaching activity until we have sufficiently dealt with the questions of the nature of the role of a coach and the necessity of coaching activity in sport. Therefore, the purpose of the following section is to investigate, from major opposing viewpoints, the following question. What is the role of a coach in sport and to what extent is the presence of someone in that role necessary to an individual's participation in sport? Major opposing viewpoints to be considered involve a) the role of a coach as either a teacher or a trainer and b) the presence of a coach as either necessary or

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35Ravizza, K. and Daruty, K., P. 71.

unnecessary.

The Role of a Sport Coach

The traditional role of a coach in sport, especially in the West, has been that of eliciting, from certain athletes, performances which are superior to the performances of their opponents in competition. This seems to be the most common understanding of the sport coach and coaching activity. But, this is not enough to tell us what a coach does. Therefore, it is important to determine the nature of coaching activity in order to begin to analyze and attempt to justify that activity.

Dictionary definitions describe a coach in three ways as follows:

1)a carriage, bus, or passenger car
2)one who trains athletes or athletic teams
3)a tutor who prepares a student for an examination36

The first does not appear applicable to sport but the connotations of that definition may have some implications for our understanding of the contemporary concept of coaching. The second is obviously the most applicable. The third does not directly apply, however, some would maintain that a sport coach is a special kind of teacher.

Reconsideration of the first item might shed some light on this definitional difficulty if we understand those items mentioned as means of conveyance. That is, they are the means by which something, freight or passengers, might be

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36check any standard dictionary

transported from one place to another. We might not think of a sport coach as a means of conveyance in the transportation sense. But, I suggest that the concept of conveyance has had some influence on the concept of coaching in sport. In this manner, the coach becomes, for the athlete, the means of conveyance from one position or condition to that of another. The coach, then, takes on a significant role in the activity of athletic performance. Further, this notion also provides some insight into how the nature of coaching activity is or should be defined. This is an ambiguous concept which allows some flexibility in definition. It would not seem inappropriate in view of this flexibility to consider a coach to be either a trainer or teacher. This characteristic of flexibility in conceptual definition leads to ambiguity in actual practice. Therefore, we may understand the common concept of a coach to be that of a person who either teaches or trains others for some purpose.

There is in fact a problem with this kind of statement although such statements are commonly accepted as true and sufficient to explain coaching activity. Is teaching the same as training? Further, if they are different, how is that difference related to coaching activity? And still further, how does such a distinction, if meaningful, relate to the philosophical justification of coaching activity?

I suggest that teaching and training are not the same thing. They are quite different concepts. These concepts relate to coaching activity in describing or categorizing

methods and techniques used by the coach. Teaching involves the transmission or acquisition of knowledge. Training involves only a responsive action.

The most appropriate definition I have found for sport coaches is from Geoff Gowan who says: "A coach is an individual who prepares another individual or individuals for competitive endeavor."37 Sport coaching is an interventive activity engaged in for the purpose of enhancing an athlete's performance in competition. That activity may take the form of either teaching or training. However, given the coach's discretion in deciding which form, or combination thereof, his/her activity will take, and the nature of various other duties he/she must perform, no mere definition of coaching will tell us what a coach does, that is, what specific type of activities he engages in, or ought to engage in. It is commonly thought that sport is operated according to the only model possible for that type of activity. That is, there is a prevalent assumption that there is only one model of sport which includes defined roles for both participation and administration and that that model is paternalistic. However, I think we can make a meaningful distinction between the basic constitutive structure of the institution from the operative structure of the institution.

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37Gowan, G. "Coaching Philosophy and its Effect on Coaching Performance," (2 parts), Coaching Association of Canada Bulletin, #11, Oct. 1975, Pp. 2;14, and #12, Jan. 1976, Pp. 243;9.

The constitutive structure of the institution of sport, as defined by the rules of specific sports, does not specifically define the roles of all those persons involved in sport by that model noted above. Attention is given largely to the players themselves. The role of coaches is not defined by the constitutive structure of sport. The role of coaches is defined largely by what coaches themselves actually do.

It would appear, however, that 'coaching' has, itself, evolved into somewhat of an institution within an institution. That is, we may identify specific role or behavioral expectations for coaches even though official rules of specific sports and job descriptions of employed coaches frequently do not specifically define such expectations. As previously suggested, then, the role of a coach may be interpreted by the coach. That interpretation is subsequently displayed in specific methodology the coach employs in relations with athletes.

The operative structure of the institution then is determined by persons in authoritative positions within the institution. The views and operative procedures of those people significantly influence the type of opportunity and thus the type of benefits to be derived from participation in the activities that the institution promotes which, I suggest, includes definition and delineation of goals which are to be pursued.

Further, then, paternalism is not part of the

constitutive structure of sport. That is, paternalism is not a necessary condition, for anyone, for participation in sport activity to occur. Paternalism is, rather, an attitude expressed through operative procedures of those persons who administrate the activities of the institution. In sport, the most influential role of this kind is filled by coaches. It is my view that assuming sport, as constituted by rules of the game, to be an institution of a paternalistic nature is a mistake. Further, assuming that coaches and athletes must participate within such a model places significant limitations on operational flexibility which may be allowed coaches as well as limiting participation flexibility for athletes. That is, assuming sport to be essentially and acceptably paternalistic has serious implications for coaching methodology such that coaching activity is thought to be a necessary component of an athlete's participation in sport.

The Necessity of a Sport Coach

There is no doubt that many would consider a coach to be a necessary component of an athlete's success in sport. However, if we accept the notion that the burden of justification is on those who would restrict an individual's freedom, then we need also to provide justification for this claim of necessity.

It would seem that if the presence of a coach is necessary to an athlete's success in sport, then

justification is not needed. It is commonly thought that sport would not exist, or at least would not be sport, without coaches. This is, of course, true. However, I suggest that to claim necessity is at least a logical mistake. Even if necessity could be demonstrated, we would still be required to supply justification for a coach's exercise of authority over athletes because the problem as stated at the beginning of this paper would still exist. In that discussion attention would shift to other aspects of sport participation, specifically, the athlete's success. That is, we would need to clarify what is meant by the term 'athlete's success' and also to define the value of pursuing that specific goal.

One article38 defines the goal of an athlete's sport participation as "optimal performance" in order to allow for pursuit of a broader goal than just winning. The same article, however, excludes some other aspects of sport participation from their discussion:

> "The social motivations for sport participation such as playing for fun, exercise, and/or the health benefits or the diverse social values obtained are excluded from consideration because these aspects are not directly relevant to the topic of this paper."39

Now, the same article advocates "personal fulfillment" as part of that goal to be pursued. One would think that all

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38Ravizza, K. and Daruty, K. "Paternalism and Sovereignty in Athletics, Limits and Justifications of the Coach's Exercise of Authority Over the Adult Athlete," Journal of the Philosophy of Sport, 11, 1985, Pp. 71-82.

39Ravizza and Daruty, P. 72.

those aspects mentioned above are, indeed, an integral part of personal fulfillment and, thus, should be included in the whole of an athlete's sport experience. I suggest further, that those aspects mentioned above are relevant to the justification of coaching in view of the commonly accepted purpose of coaching activity. It is commonly assumed that the goals of a coach are the same as those of any given athlete and, as such, are left unstated. The only observable goal which both could jointly pursue is that of winning in competition. However, this has been argued by some as restrictive to the goal of personal fulfillment. If attention to these additional aspects of participation is not thought to be part of the coach's duties, for whatever reasons, the sphere of a coach's justified influence would appear to be substantially reduced. If the presence of a coach is unnecessary, as it seems to be, then justification is essential.

The concept of legitimate authority answers the question of when one person may give directives to another such that the person being directed has an obligation to obey. Thus, the concept of legitimate authority is a moral justification of the exercise of authority. In order to attempt justification we need to know what kind of authority a coach either acquires or exercises. Four kinds of authority will be reviewed in turn.

The first type of authority to be noted follows directly from the above description of legitimate authority.

It seems that the ultimate appeal to a justification of the exercise of authority is morality. There is, however, a question of what standards to use in evaluation. That is, whose principles do we use, or who is to say what is moral and what is not? This is a problem which needs to be addressed by each coach but is frequently interjected merely to defend a presumed right to some personal preference. However, I concur with Robert L. Simon who says: "The obvious answer to "Who is to say?" is that the individual with the best reasons has the best grounds for saying."40 I suggest that the answer lies not only with the individual views of the coach but also with society as a whole whom the coach is thought to represent. What, then, is the usual contemporary basis of a coach's moral authority?

I suggest that the usual basis of a coach's moral authority is derived from two sources. The first is that informal source of tradition which will be discussed shortly. The second is that formal source which is the defined purpose of the activity. Authority is commonly justified according to the purpose of the directive. As the supporting organization usually defines that purpose, parameters of moral authority for the coach may also be defined by that organization.

The second type of authority to be noted is epistemic

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40Simon, R. L. Sports and Social Values, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1985, P. 10.

authority. Justification of actions by epistemic authority involves an appeal to knowledge or to persons who are knowledgeable. An epistemic authority is one who has acquired knowledge that another or others have not. This does not mean, however, that the word of another is automatically accepted as a statement of fact.

The athlete is initially considered to be ignorant of both the demands of competition and his/her ability to meet those demands, as well as the value of sport and competition itself. The coach is thought to be knowledgeable regarding those items and therefore able to advise the athlete authoritatively to that end. The coach, then, would appear to be an epistemic authority. It seems as well that this is the most appropriate reason for establishing such a position. However, I suggest that epistemic authority is not the only source of a coach's authority nor is it, in many cases, the major source.

Arguments that attempt to justify epistemic authority include such considerations as unequal abilities and intellectual capacities, availability of data at any given time and place, the amount of data available exceeding one person's capacity to know, and the variable means by which each individual acquires knowledge, such as research, thought, experience, and experimentation. These arguments provide practical reasons for accepting epistemic authority. It appears reasonable and appropriate to accept epistemic authority as invested in individual persons, but a position

of authority itself does not ensure that implied epistemic authority is legitimate. Legitimacy here deals with the question of how we know that a person actually does know what he/she is claimed to know. What reason do we have for accepting what is said by 'x' other than the fact that he/she occupies a position which declares him/her to be an epistemic authority, that is, a knowledgeable person. The position, or any accompanying certification, only supplies a 'prima facie' reason for accepting the person as a legitimate epistemic authority. Is a coach's epistemic authority justified by appeal to his/her position or is it justified by his/her actual knowledge? If we do not rely on the position alone as an appropriate justification of epistemic authority then we must evaluate the actual knowledge of the coach. I suggest that the actual knowledge of a coach is evaluated by inappropriate means. That is, coaches are evaluated according to their effectiveness in developing their athletes' abilities to meet the demands of competition. The transfer of knowledge is not a primary concern, and therefore, is not used as criteria in evaluation of the coach's activity. This means that coaching activity is evaluated according to the success of coaches' athletes in competition and not by assessing knowledge, of any kind, which may have been gained by the athlete. Some might suggest that the athletes performance itself is a kind of knowledge. Granted, learning to move in certain ways may be accepted as a form of knowing 'how' to do some particular

thing. However, the same performance result is possible and, I suggest, frequently pursued via techniques of modifying behavioral response without allowing athletes to intentionally modify their own behavior. Thus, behavioral learning is not consistent with the notion of personal responsibility which includes the individuals awareness and intent to act according to a choice made from alternatives. Performance alone, without intent on the part of the athlete in pursuit of that performance, is insufficient to justify any and all directives given by a coach to an athlete to that end.

The third type of authority to be noted is that of political authority. Political authority is concerned with what people do rather than what they believe.41 Michael D. Bayles attempts to clarify this concept of authority in terms of power.

The ordinary concept of power is the common view of controlling the conduct of others through the ability to enforce directives or commands given. This involves an intent to do harm to subjects who do not comply with directives and the intent to bestow benefits to those who do comply. This reward-harm model involving an ability to enforce directives is usually associated with coercion. Due to a dependence on coercion the 'ability' to enforce

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41Bayles, M. D. "The Functions and Limits of Political Authority," in Harris, R. B.(Ed), Authority: A Philosophical Analysis, Pp. 101-111, P. 101.

directives, in itself, through this model is not considered an exercise of legitimate authority.

The social scientific concept of power excludes the items of reward and harm but relies on persuasion to convince someone that it is best for him/her to comply with certain directives. By this model: "x can get y to perform actions by telling, commanding, or ordering him/her to do them."42 The subject will comply with directives without being forced to do so because he/she recognizes and accepts that there are other good reasons for his/her compliance. On this view, the subject's autonomy is not violated.

The coach is established in a position of authority within the organizational structure of the sport group. By virtue of his/her position, the coach has the capacity to promise benefits or threaten harms to the athlete to further the purpose of enhancing the athlete's performance. Here we should note as Bayles does: "authority over the supreme coercive power in a population or territory is necessary for the existence of political authority..."43 It is, in addition, always implicit that that coercive power may be used to further the purpose for which the position is specified if 'de facto' authority ceases or fails. It is frequently thought that a lack of coercive power weakens the capacity of the coach to further the purpose of his position. It seems that this alone is sufficient evidence

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42Bayles, M. D. P. 103.
43Bayles, M. D. P. 106.

that the authority of the coach is, to a large extent, political authority. But, does the coach really need coercive power to accomplish his purpose? Does the purpose of enhancing the athlete's performance justify a coach's use of coercive power to that end? I suggest that the answer to this question is usually offered with reference to the actual, defined, purpose of the organization which supports or has established the position.

Positions of authority are established by organizations for some specific purpose. However, obligations to obey directives are dependent upon the specific kind of authority and its application by persons occupying that position. Bayles notes:

"A position of authority is specified for a purpose. The person who occupies the position is responsible for promoting that purpose and is allowed some discretion in the method of doing so. Further, the sphere of his power is specified by the subject over which he may issue directives."44

Bayles concludes that justification of political authority lies in its function. He states:

"Thus, political authority is justified in terms of its function. The function of a thing is not merely what it does, but what it does as contributing toward a purpose. The function of authority is therefore specified by filling in the purpose and subject matter in a rule constituting a position of authority."45

In application, the political authority of a coach is usually justified in terms of the function of that authority. This appeal is understandable as rules that

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44Bayles, M. D. P. 105
45Bayles, M. D. P. 108.

constitute the role of a coach are provided by the supporting organization. Rarely, if ever, are defined roles provided for the coach in constitutive rules of sport activity. The fourth type of authority to be discussed is that of social tradition. Authority would seem to be initially a social phenomenon. If an individual could carry on his/her affairs entirely without any relation or interactions with other individuals, the concept of authority would be meaningless. It is this unavoidable interaction of social life that necessitates appeals to authority. There is a need for a reference point to guide the nature of and acceptable means of interaction between individuals. Also, there is need for provision for mediation between individuals when their interactions are not harmonious.

The social aspect of human beings is considered the "primary human condition".46 Most of what we know about humans is derived from studies of interrelations or interactions between individuals or groups of individuals in various situations. W.D. Handcock in his discussion of authority in society notes the profound influence of tradition in our individual lives. "Social tradition exercises an authority over us which none of us escapes, and which indeed provides the ground and scaffolding of our

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46Handcock, W.D. "The Function and Nature of Authority in Society," Philosophy, Vol. xxxiii, No. 105, 1953, Pp. 99-112, P. 102.

personal lives."47 The manner in which we conduct our affairs is guided by the way things have been done before and are normally done at the present time. Tradition gives us a starting point from which we develop our own individual place in society. Tradition provides us with various sets of role expectations for individuals in certain situations. We are expected to comply with those role expectations to ensure continuity in the established order of society without which social relationships would be chaotic. Therefore, tradition serves to maintain social order. Maintenance of social order and existing role expectations is facilitated to a large degree by unquestioned acceptance of tradition. It is generally accepted that most people do not subject their social experiences to philosophical analysis.48 Another example of the strength of tradition lies in noting how people and organizations in general resist or react to change.49

Structure is the most visible aspect of authority. As such, structure is the aspect of authority with which we are most familiar. However, the source of authority, which we do not see as readily, and rarely question, is more expansive and complex. The source of authority is established over time and across the entire fabric of a

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47Handcock, P. 100.
48Handcock, P. 100.
49O'Donnell, D. and Bruce, G. "Change Agent Theory and It's Application to Recreation Administration," for 1974 Congress for Recreation and Parks, October, 1974.

society. Thus, the most influential source of authority lies in social tradition. I would argue that the influence of traditional role expectations outweighs that of any institutional set of expectations for a sport coach. Traditional role expectations, then, determine the structure of authority used by the coach.

The source of the coach's authority is twofold in this regard. First, authority is assigned to the coach by the sponsoring institution which is presumed to be an agent of society at large. Second, and a major factor, the coach's authority is defined and assigned through traditional role expectations associated with the term or designation of a person as a 'coach'. Ladenson50 refers to this type of authority as command authority and suggests that it is not justified by appeal to any moral assessment. It would appear, then, that the authority of a coach is commonly justified by non-moral means with restricted perceptions as to the purpose of the activity. It seems that attempts to justify coaching activities, as the exercise of authority, solely by appeal to social tradition are deficient and require further examination and support by other means of acceptable justification.

To summarize, the actual source of a coach's authority, is social tradition as supported and strengthened

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50Ladenson, R.F. "Legitimate Authority," American Philosophical Quarterly, Vol. 9(4), Oct. 1972, Pp. 335-341.

by the formal organizational structure of the sponsoring institution. Ascription of causal responsibility and accountability follow upon establishment of a person in a position of authority designated as a 'coach'.

Authority is commonly justified if it is successful in fulfilling the function for which it was established. The authority of a coach, then is justified if the coach is successful in fulfilling the purpose of enhancing the athlete's performance. This conclusion involves the assumption that enhancing the athlete's performance is also the purpose of the sponsoring institution. However, justification of a coach's authority, by this view, does not involve a consideration of the means used by the coach to fulfill the purpose or function of his/her position. As such, there is little or no consideration for the treatment accorded the individual persons, the athletes, involved in the performance. Further, although the athlete is the direct causal agent of his performance, causal responsibility as well as responsibility in the form of accountability for the athlete's performance is frequently ascribed to the athlete's coach.

If a coach is responsible for an athlete's performance, that conclusion suggests two things. First, the athlete's performance is the result of some thing or things that were done to the athlete by the coach or other external agent. Second, the athlete's performance is explicitly not the result of any intent or choice of action on the part of the

athlete himself. This conclusion further implies two things. First, the athlete's performance occurred in the only way possible. The athlete could not have done otherwise than what he/she did, at least from the point at which he came under the coach's influence. Second, the athlete cannot in any way claim any degree of responsibility, credit or blame, for his/her performance. In effect, regardless of the specific nature of the performance, the athlete is not seen as having any real, or significant, part in the performance. This conclusion, then, would be in opposition to the notion of personal responsibility.

If the athlete is responsible for his/her performance, that conclusion suggests that the athlete has the capacity, if not the ability, for free decision-making in the direction of his performance actions. The athlete may, however, be restricted in his/her capacity through lack of individual development or through other external influence. The coach is actually a minor figure in the athlete's performance. This conclusion, then, suggests that the authority by which the coach imposes his/her intervention may not be appropriately justifiable.

In my view, an appropriate role of the sport coach is that of mediating the influence of external factors and individual preferences as each affects or determines the nature of the athlete's participation and subsequent performance in sport. That is, coaches should be able to justify their activities properly according to the question

of when one influence ought to override the other. Further, I suggest the specific nature of this role would vary according to the institutional context of any given coaching position. However, whatever the context, a view on the question of who is actually responsible for the athlete's performance and why that is the case is an essential part of a coach's philosophy. That is, a coach's view on responsibility should determine the extent, if not the type, of authority appealed to and exercised by the coach. As well, this view, once established would undoubtedly influence other factors of the coach's methodology.

In view of the nature of coaching activity and the authority used in carrying out that activity, the commonly accepted notion of responsibility is, to say the least, insufficient for a complete and appropriate consideration of the nature and role of responsibility in the development of a coaching philosophy. We need to clarify our views on the actual locus of responsibility, determine what specific obligations are involved for coaches in given institutional contexts and to whom, and then decide which type of authority is most appropriate to fulfill those obligations and to what extent. Personal responsibility is an accepted characteristic of human beings and is used as the basis of other types of responsibility in our society. It follows that talk of shifting responsibility to a locus where it already exists suggests that coaches incorrectly assume that they are responsible and must subsequently exercise some

type of authority whether or not that authority is appropriate to the responsibility, as obligation, they actually do have. Due to this assumption of responsibility, I suggest that coaches need to consider, further, the appropriateness of those methods they use in attempts to enhance athletes' performances.

Following from the previous discussion, a major problem may be identified for coaches relevant to formulation of a coaching philosophy. How does a coach fulfill the demands of accountability in a "postion of authority" while concurrently fulfilling natural demands of fair and just treatment of athletes? I do not intend to propose a specific answer to this question here. However, I suggest that a coach's response must be a blend of what I call theory of instruction and philosophy. I make this distinction to designate theory of instruction as means of accomplishing a given end while philosophy involves a more rigorous justification of those means that are used as well as of the ends themselves. I suggest that through a theory a coach may apply what has been properly justified in a philosophy beginning with a principle of responsibility rather than a justification of authority. It is this starting point which I have attempted to provide in this chapter.

Summary

Chapter two provides a response to appeals to responsibility and authority which have been proposed to

resolve the conflict between liberty and authority in sport. A misperception of the nature and locus of performance responsibility is suggested via confusion of responsibility and accountability. Rather, athletes are proposed as being responsible for performance actions while coaches are proposed as being accountable for performance outcomes. A major problem is identified for coaches relevant to formulation of a coaching philosophy as fulfilling the demands of accountability in a 'position of authority' while concurrently fulfilling natural demands of fair and just treatment of athletes. It is suggested that a coach's response must be a blend of what is called theory of instruction and philosophy. Through a theory a coach may apply what has been properly justified in a philosophy beginning with a principle of responsibility rather than a justification of authority.

The next chapter offers a re-assessment of the concept of autonomy and its relation to an athlete's participation in sport as a necessary precursor to developing a more appropriate and comprehensive criteria for assessing conditions of autonomous participation in sport.

## Chapter 3

## Re-assessment of Autonomy in Sport

### The Concept of Autonomy

This chapter provides basic information regarding the concept, or various conceptions, of autonomy. As part of the process of conceptual analysis questions involving what is meant by the term autonomy and what it means to be autonomous are posed and addressed.

Although various definitions of autonomy have been proposed,[51] it seems that they may be categorized into three major discussion areas, or conceptions of autonomy, at least for the purposes of this paper. Those conceptions are philosophical, psychological, and political. I suggest these categories as useful guides to discussion and understanding throughout the remainder of this paper.

### The Philosophical Conception of Autonomy

I begin with the philosophical concept of autonomy as I take it to be the foundation of those other aspects to be addressed in this paper. Autonomy may be initially defined as self-rule.[52] In effect, this notion entails an individual deciding which actions to do or not do. The essential assumption underlying this notion is that of an individual having a real and realizable potential for self-rule. That

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51Angeles, P. P. 22; Feinberg, J. P. 15; Somerville, M.A. P. 3; Hopkins, R.L. P. 203-4.

52Angeles, P. P. 22; Haworth, L. P. 11.

is, an individual is assumed to possess at least the potential for making action decisions and subsequently acting on those decisions. However, this notion stops short of suggesting that individuals possess the actual ability to act on those decisions they make. The actual ability to act on decisions is then considered as part of the psychological conception of autonomy.

The Psychological Conception of Autonomy

Psychologists have attempted to assess autonomy via personality tests.53 This approach must necessarily assume individual capacity as either an inherent trait or characteristic of persons or as a developed ability and not as a potential. However, it is not clear, by those instruments used, what is meant by autonomy, nor are the criteria for the existence of that state which the concept is supposed to describe. Those instruments may be shown to be based on measures of behavior. But, if individual autonomy is an internal condition of the individual person, then behavior is not likely to be as accurate as we would like in measures of a person's autonomy. It seems that autonomy would be an especially vague concept in behavioral psychology. However, there is an available description of the psychological concept of autonomy which is largely known by, but not restricted to, observation of an individual's

53Smith, W. M. and Jones, M. B. "Astronauts, Antarctic Scientists, and Personal Autonomy," Aerospace Medicine, Feb. 1962, Pp. 162-166.

behavior.54

The psychological conception of autonomy consists of two main aspects of an individual's ability to act on decisions. The first is agency, and the second is competence.55 Agency involves the condition of an individual actually producing an effect from an intentional action. That is, an individual brings about a change in something in this world by direct interaction with it by virtue of intending to bring about that change through that interaction. Agency is not thought of as an inherent ability of all individuals. Each of us must learn how to bring about changes in the world intentionally. Agency, then, is said to be an acquired ability. It follows that there also exists a real possibility that some individuals may not acquire the ability of agency, or at least, individuals may acquire this ability to varying degrees.

Competence is very similar to yet dependent upon agency. Competence refers to those skills acquired subsequent to a developed ability as an agent. Competence refers further to the adequacy, that is, the success of those skills acquired in meeting at least the minimal requirements of sustaining life in this world.56

Competence further involves awareness of both one's

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54Haworth, L. Autonomy: An Essay in Philosophical Psychology and Ethics, New Haven, Conn: Yale Univ. Press, 1986.

55Haworth, L. P. 13;16.
56Haworth, L. P. 13.

agency in ability to initiate intentional acts and one's effectiveness in realizing intentions of those acts. Competence, then, is composed of both knowledge and action. It follows that assessment of competence would also be comprised of two components, intent and consequence. However, specific criteria and priority are more difficult to discover.

The Political Conception of Autonomy

Applying the notion of autonomy to individuals is a historically recent occurrence.57 Discussions of political autonomy, especially in regard to individuals, have apparently been subsumed under the conceptual heading of 'freedom'. I do not propose an extensive analysis of freedom. However, it seems that major issues in such discussions revolve around a determination of when, why, and how, the governing body ought to regulate the activities of an individual member of that state.

A basic tenet of a democratic society is that of freedom of individuals to govern themselves and regulate their own actions. The individual, or rather individuals collectively decide when, why, and how constraints will be placed on their activity. The governing body in this case is not thought of as a dictatorial decision-making authority

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57Feinberg, J. Rights, Justice and the Bounds of Liberty, Essays In Social Philosophy, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980, Ch. 1, Pp. 3-29, especially pp. 18 and 23.

but rather as more of an administrative or enforcement agency. Whereas, in a totalitarian society individuals have little control over their lives in the way of decision-making beyond their immediate circumstance.

The Value of Autonomy

Regardless of which specific definition of autonomy one accepts there is still a question of what value it has and for whom. This involves determination of those reasons which are acceptable as valid justification for a)recognizing potential, b)allowing or enhancing development, and c) allowing expression through exercise of developed potential. Although there may be some variation there are two major responses to this question which appeal to inherent value and consequentialist value.

The view that living autonomously has inherent value suggests that the condition of individuals making their own life-controlling decisions is valuable in itself. Therefore, they should be allowed to do so. The consequentialist view suggests that the value of autonomy is contingent upon consequences derived from living in that way. That is, living autonomously provides consequences that have value for the individual and perhaps others which, in addition, could very likely not be acquired in any other way.

Implications for practical activity that follow from the intrinsic view involve determination of and respect for autonomy based rights. Implications that follow from the

consequentialist view involve determination of privilege, merit, reward and utility. More could be said about these notions of rights and privilege, however, that will not be done here.

The Philosophical Value of Autonomy

The value of autonomy in a philosophical sense is personal. That is, autonomy as part of the essential nature of each individual person is the basis for recognizing an individual to be that particular individual which exists separate from any other individual. This suggests that if we deny individual autonomy then, the 'person' disappears. Part of what it means to be autonomous as a person involves recognition of internal wants, desires, etc. and forming them into intentions to act with full awareness of a real potential to actually fulfill those intentions. If we accept the notion of value in the individual being aware of experiences in a manner that some organic biological automata would not, then individual autonomy could be thought to provide the basis for the value of life itself.

The Psychological Value of Autonomy

The value of autonomy in a psychological sense is also personal in that it involves an extension of intentions into the world. The psychological value of autonomy is intrinsic as influenced by relations to the world in basically two ways. The first involves consequentialist feedback regarding the level and effectiveness of an individual's personal

competence in interacting with the environment. The second involves an individual's own perception of the value of the 'self', the self-concept.

Even if 'what it means to be', the self, is not wholly comprised of the biological organism, it is through this medium that we are aware of what that self is.58 That is, a self-concept as a definition or personal awareness of that which constitutes the nature of a particular individual is determined or at least heavily influenced by the competence of the individual's actions.

The Political Value of Autonomy

The value of autonomy in a political sense requires at least the mention of a distinction between individual and group autonomy. However, emphasis in this discussion is placed on the value of individual autonomy. This situation appears to be unavoidable as most human actions occur in a reciprocal social relation.

If individual autonomy is of value, as I have argued, then there must as well be some value to that individual's autonomy in relation to other individuals. That is, there must be some value for me, or the group, in recognizing other individuals as autonomous persons and further either allowing or assisting them in exercising that autonomy.

The political value of individual autonomy may be

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58Haworth, L. P. 13; Locke, J. Essay, Bk. 4, Ch. 9, Paragraph 1-3.

thought of as either internal or external. The value is internal as benefits which are specifically desired actually accrue to the individual desiring them and is external as an individual's autonomy contributes to the process of other individuals receiving their desired benefits.

The individual political value of autonomy can be derived largely from both a factual and a perceived status of independence. As a competent, independent member of a group an individual may derive benefit from interaction with other individuals in that group or representatives of the group's interests. However, benefits are not derived only from the group. The individual also benefits from the condition of independence itself as the ability to act independently.

We recognize that persons do exist as separate individual entities who do have varying talents and perceptions of the world. It follows that other individuals within a group as well as the group as a whole may derive some benefit from the talents and perception of each individual of that group. Further, there is practical if not inherent value in not being required to provide direction for the actions of a multitude of individuals within a group.

The value of autonomy lies in the choice of action. How, then, is an individual's choice of a particular action of value in a group? The value of a particular choice is derived from two sources. First, as we value individual

autonomy itself, the choice is of value in that it is freely chosen. Autonomous participation and contribution in a given group, or community, originates with the individual person. The "community" does not choose actions or goals to be pursued. Rather, individuals make choices which form the nature of the community, although the influence of any given individual may vary. Second, the choice is of value in that it contributes to promotion of shared goals of individuals of the group. However, an individual's action is only of value, even to oneself, if it is conducted competently. Skills in actions related to promotion of shared goals of the group are of greater value than those which do not do so. It follows that competence in certain specific skills or types of skills is of greater value within a group than may be competence in other skills. As the initial value of an action or choice, as noted above, lies in the aspect of being freely chosen, the value of an individual's autonomous action within a group may be found in the motivation of the individual to engage in a particular action.

The Possibility of Autonomy

The major concern of this section is whether or not individual autonomy is possible at all, and if so, in what way. Further, is autonomy possible in sport? Can individuals actually determine their own actions free from external influence or control? That is, can any individual actually be the sole agent of an action which that individual performs?

The Philosophical Possibility of Autonomy

The philosophical possibility of autonomy involves establishing, or at least accepting, the notion that each individual is a separate entity from other individuals with the potential for choosing and intentionally initiating one, or any, action. Further, if we think of agency as the intentional initiation of one, or any, action in place of an other possible action, including non-action, doing nothing, then we can also accept the possibility of autonomy.

Some theorists, specifically behaviorists, claim that all actions are initiated in response to some stimulus, therefore, autonomous actions are impossible. Granted, stimulus encounters are unavoidable in this world. However, extreme behaviorism at least has been sufficiently refuted to allow that a specific response initiated by an individual to any given stimulus is not necessarily limited to only one possibility.59

The Psychological Possibility of Autonomy

The psychological possibility of autonomy involves establishing conditions of an individual actually being able to act on decisions made. That is, is it possible for an individual to actually produce an effect from an intentional action?

If we accept agency as an acquired ability, we must

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59Haworth, L. Ch. 4, Pp. 67-82; Flanagan, O.J. The Science of the Mind, Ch. 4, Pp. 83-117.

necessarily presuppose the possibility of agency. Further, if we accept competence as an extension of agency we must also presuppose that possibility. However, presupposing does not prove. Therefore, consideration should be given to opposition in the way of possible restrictions on agency and competence. Further, it must be determined whether those identifiable restrictions are sufficient to obliterate even the possibility of autonomous action.

By way of introduction to this and later discussion, I suggest that any circumstances which may be identified as restrictions to acquisition are to be derived largely from consideration of characteristics of the individual, the specific task with which the individual is faced, and the general environment in which the individual is located.

The most obvious restriction to agency acquisition lies in the physical make-up of the individual. One who is at birth or at some other point in life, either physically deformed or lacking in proper functioning of sensory or motor capacities would be restricted in ways and means of interacting with the environment. Now, whether mental characteristics can be appropriately considered a restriction is more problematic. However, it seems reasonable to think that individuals do have some predispositions at birth. Whatever the origin, we can discuss restrictions as constraints, as does Feinberg,60 as

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60Feinberg, J. Social Philosophy, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1973, Pp. 12-15.

both internal and external where internal constraints are those originating within the person and external constraints are those originating from some source other than the person.

A second restriction on the possibility of autonomy can be found in the nature of the specific task with which the individual is faced. A specific task may be chosen by the individual or a task may be forced upon the individual whereby a reaction is required or unavoidable. For example, pushing an object(a box) away to arms length in order to procure more space in which to move, is a voluntary act of agency. However, deflecting or pushing away the same box as it falls from a shelf toward one's head, although an act of agency, is not necessarily voluntary. The individual in this case may, in fact, choose the means by which harm is avoided(the task) by dodging, blocking with the arm, etc. However, the fact that some response/act is required is unavoidable. One may 'do nothing' and get hit but that is not considered competent.61

The third possibility of restriction to agency and competence acquisition lies in the environment in which an individual is located. The restriction here lies in opportunities which the environment affords for 'experience'. A static, unchanging environment provides limited opportunities while a dynamic, constantly changing

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61Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics, 1111b, 5.

environment provides a variety of opportunities for experience.

I conclude, then, that the psychological conception of individual autonomy as it consists of agency and competence, is possible. However, there are, as well, various sources for the possibility of restriction in acquisition of that autonomy.

The Political Possibility of Autonomy

The political possibility of autonomy involves establishing conditions of expression, perhaps even development, where that expression does not interfere with similar expression by other individuals and is not interfered with by others. Further, autonomy is possible in a group only if shared goals actually exist and all or at least a large portion of the group contribute to promotion of those goals. We must determine, then whether it is possible for an individual to regulate his/her or her own activities within a group and, if so, to what extent.

It seems that again the possibility exists but with restrictions. An individual may regulate his/her or her own actions within a group only so long as those actions do not interfere with actions of others in the group nor with the collective intentions of the group. Additional factors that might influence this possibility include characteristics and skills of the individual(competence) and other resources available to both the individual and the group.

However, most people engage in discussions with adults

in mind. A large percentage of our sport participants are not adults, either developmentally or legally. Minors are declared incompetent by law. This is a legal, constitutive, rule governing participation in societal institutions. Adults agree arbitrarily that young persons up to a specified age, are mentally incompetent. That is, youth do not have the capacity, ability, nor the right to make rational decisions.62

The advantages of a group are derived from the opportunity for individuals to acquire some specific benefits. However, there is a real danger of developing a dependency relation between the individual and 'the group' which emphasizes the external nature of benefits derived from that opportunity. That is, the group is not necessarily concerned with the individual participant's benefits or experience, except that in acquiring such benefits and experience the individual may provide some substantial return to the group. If the value of autonomy is perceived by some group to be more external than internal, as more valuable to provision of benefits for the group, then individual autonomous action may become a privilege in that group even if a right can be clearly claimed and justified. Further, due to diversity in nature of individuals noted previously, it is not likely that the concerns of all individuals can be addressed in group decisions. There is,

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62Ravizza, K. and Daruty, K. P. 73.

then, in this sense, a danger of tyranny of the majority.63

As an extension of group influence over time which develops into traditions within a given group, it is important to note the possibility of socialization into those group traditions. Traditions do not necessarily reflect changes in individual values, needs and desires over time. There is, then, a possibility of restriction of individual autonomy through socialization and social tradition.

I conclude that, individual political autonomy is possible. However there exists, as well, a concurrent possibility of restrictions that could severely limit that possibility for autonomy such that, in fact, individual political autonomy would be difficult to achieve.

Autonomy in Sport

As sport training and performance, in both competitive and singular forms, involve aspects of choosing and implementing action, Laurence Haworth provides a means of illustrating what I understand to be the common conception of autonomy in sport. The three components of normal autonomy which Haworth describes as competence, procedural independence, and self-control are most useful here.

Competence

Sport performance involves implementing specific physical skills; therefore, it is natural to think of

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63Haworth, L. P. 116.

competence in those terms. An athlete would be considered competent to the extent that execution of a given skill is successful. Critical competence in the form of reasoning skills would involve development, implementation, and success of strategies and tactics.

Procedural Independence

Although perhaps variable to some extent across specific sports and levels of participation, there is, I think an identifiable commonality as to procedural independence for all sports. That commonality revolves around a pervasive and influential assumption of the necessity of a 'coach' in an athlete's performance. The locus of decision making for an athlete's sport activity, then, is either transferred or pre-established in the position of 'coach'. In many cases, this decision making on the part of the coach extends up to the point of actual performance execution. Procedural independence, then, would not appear to fill any meaningful role in a common conception of autonomy in sport.

Self-Control

Although there may be a recognizable aspect of self-control involved in sport performance, the extent to which it is required or allowed may vary according to management style implemented by the coach. Three examples of self-control aspects in sport come immediately to mind. Again, with the central aspect of sport being physical skill,

control of one's body in execution of those skills is important. Other aspects more in accord with Haworth's model include adherence to game plans and non-retaliation in the form of fighting or rule breaking.

Given an emphasis on the external nature of skill performance and locus of decision control, the common conception of autonomy in sport, even regarding individual persons, appears to be more in line with the political conception of autonomy described earlier.

The Value of Autonomy in Sport

A comprehensive study of the value of an individual's choice of a particular action in sport would evaluate that action in two sub-contexts. First, is the context of the community of all sport individuals as participants in something called sport. Second, is the context of specific sport groups in which an individual participates. Although worthy of future study, a detailed discussion of these sub-contexts is well beyond the scope of this paper. However, it remains that the value of an individual's action in sport lies in the act being freely chosen, competently conducted, and which contributes to promotion of shared goals of the sport community either generally or specifically. By applying these criteria of value we can determine, at least in general terms, the value of individual decision making by athletes in their sport participation.

To what extent, then, is autonomous action of value in

sport? It seems that beyond the initial choice to participate in sport, additional choices as to mode of participation have little value. Competence in conduct as skill execution, although ubiquitously claimed as a developmental concern, is frequently a prerequisite to participation at least in organized sport. Regarding political value, team sports appear to be of greater value. An individual's performance is of greater value as it contributes to the success of the team. No one cares to watch or reward a 'one-man team'. On the other hand, individual sports, while touted by many as being of value lack the 'team' orientation. In such cases a team orientation is constructed via the organization that supports the individual in training, coaching, etc., such as clubs, schools and even nations. There is, at this point, a shift in the locus of decision-making to those who represent the supporting organization away from the individual participant. In sum, although intrinsic values of participation in sport are frequently expostulated, the prevalent value emphasis of an individual's choice to participate and skillful performance lies in application of that choice and performance to shared goals of some group. Therefore, the value of individual autonomy in sport is consequential rather than inherent.

The Possibility of Autonomy in Sport

Possibility can be determined by noting restrictions to philosophical, psychological, and political possibility as

previously discussed and applied in context of both individual and team sports.

The philosophical possibility of autonomy in sport may be restricted in several ways including the following. The existence of a prevalent view which influences treatment of others such that an individuals wants, desires, needs, and intentions are either insignificant, unimportant, or non-existent would sufficiently preclude individual autonomy. Further, the practice of making decisions for the person or not allowing or considering the individual's preferred choice regardless of philosophical views on the nature of persons also pre-empts individual autonomy.

The psychological possibility of autonomy in sport involves being able to act on decisions made regarding participation in sport activity. Restrictions would lie in two areas, physical and mental. Physical restrictions might take the form of imposed training practices. Any activity not suitable or relevant to the individual's needs, talents, and so forth in relation to a given sport activity would be a restriction. Psychological restrictions might take the form of allowing or encouraging choice of certain types of actions over others where those actions do not contribute to ability to act on decisions which are made by the individual, nor to competence in performance of a given skill. Deciding and directing athletes to engage in specific violent actions within a game or competition are restrictions of this type.

Overall restrictions in the environment might lie in lack of materials or resources needed to engage in the activity proper or to practice skill performance. For example, hockey players require sticks and pucks as well as an ice surface. People who ski require snow or water and skiis as well as a mountain and a power boat respectively. Sky divers require an aircraft and parachute or a very large cushion. The lack of environmental conditions of this type are restrictions on development of competence in a given sport activity.

The political possibility of autonomy in sport involves establishing conditions of expression without interference or conflict with expression by others, and includes existence and voluntary pursuit of shared goals. Participation in individual sports would not seem to involve interference of expression except where access to equipment or necessary environmental circumstances are restricted or where such sports are incorporated into forms of competition such that participants were required to change their usual or preferred mode of participation in order to facilitate chances of winning. For example, one might be induced to take drugs or use other performance enhancing techniques which might not otherwise be chosen for use by that individual.

Participation in team sports, by design, incorporates interference and conflict in the way of determined efforts to prevent opposition from reaching stated goals of the

game. Attempts to gain advantage either fairly or unfairly involves at least implicit interference in expression of autonomous action by the opposition.

Regarding shared goals, it seems that there is essentially one goal of each mode of participation that all participants must necessarily share and apparently do so voluntarily. For individual sports that goal is non-interference. Subsequently, for team sports that goal is intentional interference of some particularly designated kind.

The possibility of autonomy in sport is considered in two contexts, individual and team sports. As possibility is related to existence and degree of restriction, a continuum may be envisioned as extending from totally autonomous individual sport through totally controlled team sport according to criteria of a)equipment required, b)necessary relations with other persons, and c)dependence on environmental circumstance.

The greatest possibility for autonomy in sport may be found in individual sports that require little or no equipment, require little or no interaction with other persons, and do not depend on the environment for opportunity to participate. The most obvious example seems to be distance running.

The greatest possibility for restriction of autonomy in sport, in addition to the opposites of those criteria noted above, lies in lack of opportunity to participate in any

kind of sport activity. However, an example of restriction, via highly regulated activity may be found in American football.

Some might suggest that sport as a basic institution is accessible to all people of our society. However, it is difficult to speak of sport as an institution in isolation. That is, sport is seldom conducted in a pure institutional form. Further, an individual's actions in general are rarely conducted without either influence from or influence on others in roles established within various social institutions. Sport is frequently conducted within or supported by other institutions, such as business and schools, which may affect the operative structure of the activity. From such a list of institutions, one might suggest a hierarchical order of autonomy-facilitating organizations for sport participation opportunities ranging from informal sport to highly organized competitions. It would seem, then, that individual autonomy in sport would be very difficult to achieve.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter has been to address those aspects of individual autonomy in sport which it is claimed have been largely ignored, the concept itself, value of autonomy, and possibility of autonomous action. Analysis has been attempted from the individual participant's perspective rather than the usual external approach. Three general

conceptions of autonomy have been proposed as philosophical, psychological, and political. The philosophical conception consists largely of the notion of potential for choice by individual persons. The psychological conception consists largely of notions of an individual's capacity as an agent of action and subsequent competence in skill repertoire and implementation. The political conception consists of consideration of notions regarding the actual process of decision making as controlled or influenced by the individual or by some external agent. Of these three conceptions of autonomy, the political conception is identified as prevalent in the organization and operation of sport activity.

The value of individual autonomy has been proposed as realizable in an act which is freely chosen, competently conducted, and which contributes to promotion of shared goals of some group. In sport this value is realized in team sports inherently and through imposition of a team 'superstructure' in individual sports, thus, indicating a consequentialist approach to that value.

The possibility of individual autonomy has been discussed by noting possible restrictions as to development or expression. Following on the philosophical notion as to whether each individual has at least the potential for choosing and intentionally initiating action, the psychological and political restrictions include those involving development of ability as a competent agent and

actually being allowed to make one's own decisions respectively. In sport, I have argued the political restrictions to be the most prevalent in the paternalistic operative model. In such a model individual autonomy is essentially pre-empted. It is suggested, then, that criteria for existence or achievement of individual autonomy are needed in at least three areas in order to give due consideration to a more comprehensive and appropriate conception of autonomy in sport. Those criteria need to be determined for a)the individual person, b)the environment, and c)the specific task in which the individual person is engaged within that environment. It is the basis for criteria of that kind that I have attempted to provide in this chapter. The next chapter offers a response to appeals to informed consent as one methodological technique which has been proposed as a means of resolving the conflict between autonomy and authority in sport.

## Chapter 4

## Appeal to Informed Consent

### Introduction

This chapter offers a critique of papers which have proposed the medical model of informed consent as a criteria for athlete autonomy in sport participation. More specifically, this section offers criticism of informed consent as a methodological technique for either justifying the exercise of a coach's authority or ensuring an individual athlete's autonomy in sport participation under the direction of another person who has been designated as a coach. The proposed method will be scrutinized according to its own criterion areas: information, competence, and voluntariness. I will argue that although informed consent may be an effective starting point for correcting current deficiencies in provision of sport participation opportunities, it is, by itself, insufficient to substantiate claims of allowing athlete autonomy or justifying exercise of a coach's authority.

In chapter one I suggested a change in analysis perspective from that of observer to that of participant. In chapter two I have tried to give some indication as to why the common contemporary operative model of sport as based on paternalism, especially regarding the role of the coach in that model, is antithetical to a participant-centered analysis. Before proceeding to a more detailed discussion of informed consent, more needs to be said about a basic

assumption involved in such a proposal. Appeal to a medical model of informed consent involves the assumption that the relationship which exists, or ought to exist, between an athlete and a coach is the same as that of a medical doctor and a patient. Because there are significant differences in these relationships, a medical model of informed consent cannot be applied to both in the same way. Although informed consent may be appropriate for use in medical situations, it has limited appropriateness for application in sport. Further, although some conception of informed consent may help clarify acceptable limits to a coach's authority, it is ambiguous as to both the locus and content of responsibility in the coach-athlete relationship. Information is an essential element of both medical and sport relationships while, as I would argue, consent is not. A pivotal distinction between these relationships lies in the application of information to performance. In a doctor-patient relation knowledge, experience, and ability of the doctor is applied to the performance of the doctor. The patient gives consent for the doctor to perform. In a coach-athlete relation knowledge, experience, and ability of the coach is applied to the performance of the athlete. It appears that, in sport situations, athletes must, according to the doctrine of informed consent, give consent to their own performance. Rather, athletes must give up any rights or privileges to such consent or self-controlling decisions to the coach who will in turn give consent for the athlete to

perform. Proposing the basis for decision locus on possession of specialized information may be appropriate for medical situation such as the doctor-patient relation. However, such a move is not appropriate for sport situations. In fact, appeal to information as a justification for a coach as decision locus in an athlete's performance is one of the weakest aspects of proposing a doctrine of informed consent for sport.

Those who have discussed the use of informed consent in sport make use of the medical model of informed consent as it has been developed in the American legal system. Those arguments emphasize utilization of the information aspect of that model. However, in my view, they do not sufficiently attend to the other two criterion areas of that model, competence and voluntariness which may provide the basis for more meaningful discussion of relations between a coach and an athlete than information.

Information

In the use of this technique, decisions made by one person for another may be justified if the person who gives up their claim to deciding on their own behalf receives information as to the consequences of the decision to be made. However, I suggest that knowledge of consequences is not enough. Knowledge and understanding of further consequences for long range affects and implications should be required, especially in sport, as the activity aims at requiring actions and/or behaviors which go beyond demands

of usual actions of persons. Major difficulties may be identified in practical application of this technique, especially in a paternalistic model, as follows. The amount of information given to athletes is limited. The type of information given to athletes is frequently superficial and only technical as related to performance outcome. The frequency of information to athletes is restricted by appeal to expedience.

Competence

If we can accept that each individual may be said to possess the right to function autonomously within the domain of competence possessed by that individual, then greater attention needs to be given to specific criteria which may define that domain. In Haworth's model, the domain of competence is described by a)the individual's capacity and ability for critical reflection and b)the individual's capacity and ability for acting on conclusions. The domain of competence addressed in sport is that of an individual's ability in action of a specified nature. Competence in sport is physical and not mental. Reflective consideration is not thought to be important. Sport emphasizes performance competence of a physical nature at a super-normal level, not at a minimal or normal level.

Informed consent does not suggest a developmental view of autonomy but rather suggests that autonomy is an inherent characteristic or quality of the individual that must be

respected. A rational capacity must be presumed to expect the decision/consent to be based on rational consideration of alternatives. However, consent is commonly expected as a matter of course with or without consideration of alternatives. Applying for a "try out" or simply joining the team is usually considered tacit consent to coaching directives however informed or uninformed such consent might be. Therefore, informed consent seems to imply a)autonomy abdication by the competent(normal), and b)limited capacity for development for incompetent.

The common purpose of sport participation/coaching is to develop or enhance individual capacity or ability for actions of a specific type-actions not necessarily self-directed and not necessarily moral in nature. That purpose does not include development or enhancement of individual capacity or ability for critically reflective assessment of information or decision alternatives.

Voluntariness

The traditional role of a coach in sport, especially in the West, has been that of eliciting, from certain athletes, performances which are superior to the performances of their opponents. Athletes have been trained to perform at the direction of their coach. Some might suggest that the athlete voluntarily submits to the direction of the coach and is subsequently obligated to obey those directives.

Whether or not the athlete would choose to perform in that particular manner or even to have a coach at all is

difficult to determine. However, the mere fact that the possibility exists that the athlete may actually desire to perform in alternate ways suggests that traditional coaching activity is one that is applied to the athlete from an external source. To clarify, an athlete desiring to participate in sport does so to receive certain benefits. The athlete, however, more often than not, has little or no choice in the actual sport in which to participate or the organization and operation of that sport. The athlete may, for example, participate in a particular sport or a particular organization because that is the only one available. Therefore, the athlete in this case must accept the coaches found in that organization. Coaching activity, then, although thought to be engaged in for the benefit of the athlete is not necessarily engaged in at the athlete's specific request. It follows that in some cases at least, the notion of voluntary participation may be questionable, at least to the extent in which an athlete is required to participate subject to the intervention of coaching activity.

Basis for Clarification

Principles of informed consent may be an appropriate starting point in consideration of athlete autonomy. As one article notes: "The principles of informed consent can be used to clarify the limits of a coach's authority so that

the athlete is encouraged to achieve excellence."64 Informed consent can be used as guiding principles to clarify limits to a coach's authority. However, they cannot be used to justify directives given to elicit superior performance. The performance itself must also meet any proposed criteria for individual autonomy such that the individual plays a major role in deciding and initiating the nature of performance actions.

Principles of informed consent may be sufficient as an initial step in instituting provision for allowing individuals a greater degree of control in decision-making. However, informed consent is not sufficient to provide for a methodology that facilitates development of an individual's ability to make rational decisions. Informed consent is not sufficient alone, but rather may be thought to be a necessary condition to allowing expression of individual autonomy.

Informed consent, then, addresses the political conception of autonomy and not personal autonomy. That is, such a discussion asks, 'When do I have the right to restrict actions of others?', and answers, 'When they agree to let me do so knowing the consequences of my actions for them?'. However, it seems reasonable to think that because informed consent is a political approach, it does not apply to political situations which by law have already been excluded from allowing that type of autonomy to exist.

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64Ravizza, K. and Daruty, K. P. 78.

School and community youth sport activities are part of that legal set that excludes existence of autonomous actions by participating members. This is important because the youth sport population is much larger than adult population, and more vulnerable to influence and control by significant others. It does not seem appropriate to exclude any human beings from consideration of individual, or personal, autonomy. This is especially applicable to children in view of what we know about the developmental nature of humans. Whether we choose to think of autonomy as an inherent characteristic or as a developmentally acquired characteristic consideration should be given to all ages of persons equally in proposal of either political constraints or educational provision for development. This is appropriate even if a different criteria is needed for various age groups. However, age is an arbitrary criteria for allowing certain political functions in our society. There is no direct relation between age and autonomous functioning other than that which can be observed as the influence of physical maturation.

Informed consent is not an educational or developmental means of assessing autonomy which would be more appropriate to educational objectives of assisting individual development in intellectual and physical abilities. Informed consent would seem to facilitate self-reflection in decision-making. However, in summary form, there are several objections to this claim. Sport activity, coaching, and

performance is a technical activity. Technical goals of performance take priority in sport. Athletes rarely are able to give coherent or consistent reasons for their actions regarding participation and performance. Coaches rarely are able to give coherent and consistent reasons for their actions regarding direction of athletes. The amount of information given to athletes is limited. The type of information given to athletes is frequently superficial and only technical. The frequency of information to athletes is restricted.

Informed consent addresses only minimal criteria for non-interference of expression. It does not address individual capacity or development. Capacity is presupposed, or not, and development is irrelevant. This seems to be inconsistent with the extensive demands of pursuing superior human performance in sport. The challenge for coaches, I think, is not to find acceptable ways to allow athletes to agree to subject themselves to controlling influence but rather is to provide task environments which facilitate meaningful development of and increase in capacity for expression of individual autonomy. That is, rather than making decisions for athletes via such means as informed consent, coaches should promote informed decision-making through development of critical competence in rational decision-making. In application of critical reflection in decision-making actions are shaped to accord with judgments. But, the reverse appears to be the norm as people frequently

shape their judgments to accord with their actions, especially if those actions are thought to be appropriate or are desired in the first place.

Summary

Chapter four offers a response to appeals to informed consent which has been proposed as one methodological technique of resolving the conflict between autonomy and authority in sport. Although informed consent may be an effective starting point for correcting current deficiencies in provision of sport participation opportunities, it is, by itself, insufficient to substantiate claims of allowing autonomy or justifying exercise of a coach's authority. Further, informed consent addresses only minimal criteria for non-interference of expression. It does not address individual capacity or development. The challenge for coaches is suggested as not to find acceptable ways to allow athletes to agree to subject themselves to controlling influence but rather is to provide task environments which facilitate meaningful development of and increase in capacity for expression of individual autonomy.

The next chapter offers a specific proposal of criteria for athlete autonomy according to these categorical distinctions.

# Chapter 5

## Criteria for Autonomy

### Introduction

This chapter offers a specific proposal of criteria for autonomy involving major components which, it is argued, have been previously either overlooked or not clearly distinguished. Specific attention is given to the person, the task, and the environment. If we can discover criteria for demonstrating existence of an autonomous, rational, condition within individual persons, then we can also supply meaningful alternatives to autonomy and personal decision restrictions. If a person meets those criteria, then he/she may be certified as an autonomous person. This is not an unreasonable expectation especially as judgments as to an individual's state of competence or incompetence are common to an assessment of individual autonomy. The following conditions are proposed as those required for an individual's sport participation to be considered autonomous. Indicators by which we might determine more specific, measurable criteria are given where possible. The following table provides an overview of major aspects to be considered.

Table 1. Criteria Overview

| Criterion Area | Elements of Criteria | Considerations |
|---|---|---|
| Person | Potential | Attribution |
| | Competence | Skill |
| | Constraints | Impulsivity |

table 1(cont.)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Task | Choice | Required vs. Allowed |
| | Complexity | Movement Sequence |
| | Time | Clock |
| | Dependency | Individual vs. Team |
| Environment | Accessibility | Opportunity & Resources |
| | Flexibility | Control Agent |
| | Controllability | Change Agent |

Criteria For An Autonomous Person

Potential

The person must accept the philosophical view of individual autonomy expressed previously in this paper. That is, one must accept the position that one actually possesses a realizable potential for making action decisions and subsequently acting on those decisions. This includes attribution of the cause of one's own actions to oneself which is commonly referred to as accepting responsibility. However, accepting potential should not be confused with accountability. Use of the term responsibility allows some ambiguity as noted in chapter two which should be avoided here.

Competence - Physical Skill

The person must possess at least some degree of ability to act on decisions which have been made by that person. This refers to the notion of agency. The person must also possess a measure of at least minimal competence in action. This refers to the ability to succeed regarding requirements of sustaining life in this world and includes actions that

may be considered more non-voluntary, necessary responses or interactions with the environment where an action is necessary to protect or sustain life. In order to fulfill action decisions an advanced degree of competence in action is required in the form of success in specific skills aimed at achieving intentional goals beyond those minimal requirements of sustaining life.

Competence - Mental Skill

Thus far I have addressed aspects of autonomy largely related to physical skill. Again, I refer to Haworth's model in which he suggests that normal autonomy is acquired through a developed capacity for critical reasoning. Before one can act on decisions, one must be able to make decisions. I think we can find application of this capacity for critical competence in sport in a discussion of what are commonly called 'principles of play'. That is, there is a certain logic to application of individual skills for success in sports, even team sports, based on the individual's decision to act.

By following the stated objectives of the game, within behaviors allowed and prescribed by the rules, certain specific principles may be stated as guidelines for proper execution of skills within the game. Given these stated objectives and principles, any situation that might arise may be subjected to an if-then propositional analysis to determine a proper response aimed at attaining the stated objectives. That is, in any given sport situation we can

say, at least technically, that a particular action or response is either correct or incorrect.

However, many people would, and I think justifiably, object to this approach even though many coaches appear to treat athletes as if this were the case. We can accept the notion of a more objective logical application of individual skills in team sports to some extent. But, as one author tells us: "In every athletic competition there are a number of strategic moves that are logically possible."65 There are many different ways to achieve the objective of the game. We can choose the way we want to pursue those objectives. This suggests that sport participants are operating largely in an indeterminate system of skill performance. Participants are required to make 'on-the-spot' decisions regarding how to apply their individual skills most effectively and appropriately toward achievement of not only objectives of the game but objectives of the team as well. This required choice demonstrates the need for critical competence in sport performance. If we accept these notions of logic and choice then I think we also need to accept the notion of potential as noted before.

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65LaRose, B. "Strategy and Tactics In Sport," SPORTS, Ottawa: Coaching Association of Canada, May 1982.

Constraints - Internal Positive

The person must possess at least some degree of internal positive constraints. This refers to what is thought of as mental self-discipline which includes such conditions as attention and concentration.

Constraints - Internal Negative

The person must possess a lack of internal negative constraints. This refers to what is thought of as mental interference or distraction which includes such conditions as worries and perceived threats.

Criteria For An Autonomous Task

Choice

The criteria for an autonomous task refers to the degree to which a task in which a person is engaged either allows or requires action decisions on the part of the individual involved. This is based on the degree or amount of alternatives in possible decisions and actions in pursuit of a chosen task. Further, an autonomous task is one which is chosen voluntarily with full knowledge of alternatives and possible consequences. In addition, a completely autonomous task would also include the possibility of terminating participation or pursuit of that task. Self-paced actions involving closed skills will be most likely to meet this criteria.

Complexity

The task must be of a complexity consistent with the

individual's competence. Sports composed of simple skills as opposed to complex skills meet this criteria.

Time

The task must be executed without time constraint. Although the presence of a time clock may be considered an interesting and appropriate challenge, it also restricts the amount of time available for decision-making. Skills executed during 'stop time' or without the presence of a time clock meet this criterion.

Dependence

This includes tasks that can be completed without reliance upon the actions of others, notably teammates. Tasks that do not include possibility of interference from opponents also meet this criterion.

Criteria For An Autonomous Environment

An autonomous environment is one which allows or provides necessary resources for completion of a task. Such an environment contains a lack of external negative constraints and the presence of minimal external positive constraints. Although the environment includes many factors which might influence one's activity in some way to some degree, two major aspects will be focused on here, the institution of sport and the role of the coach.

Sport as an institution is thought to provide at least the possibility of opportunity of doing things that could not be done without the existence of sport. There is,

however, recent concern regarding what some view as an autonomy inhibiting nature of sport. Subsequently, some authors, as previously noted, have proposed criteria for assisting those involved to follow in their activities in order to ensure that autonomy of individual athletes is allowed expression. This does not necessarily incorporate the notion that autonomy is to be promoted or developed. It is merely allowed to be expressed by those who might possess the capacity to do so. Those who have proposed criteria for athlete autonomy in sport do not, in my view, provide sufficient means of analyzing the institution of sport itself in order to determine whether, and if so how, individual autonomy is either facilitated or inhibited. Proposing a criteria for counteracting inhibition is meaningless in theoretical and practical terms if we do not know what inhibitory mechanisms are to be counteracted. Therefore, I propose a more specific analysis of the institution of sport according to the environment criteria proposed.

Haworth's work is again a useful guide to this analysis because of the structural features of institutions he discusses in relation to individual autonomous function in society. As Haworth states:

> "An exhaustive account of the difference between an autonomy-facilitating and an autonomy-inhibiting institution or set of institutions can be derived by viewing the matter from the perspective of the autonomous-to-be individual who either participates in or would participate in the

institutions."66

In this regard, then, an institution may be described as either autonomy facilitating or autonomy inhibiting in relation to the goals and purposes of the individual who participates in that institution. A priori traits of institutions proposed by Haworth include accessibility, flexibility, and controllability.67 An institution may be said to possess any of these traits at a degree along a facilitation continuum for each of those aspects noted above.

Accessibility

Accessibility refers to the availability of opportunity to participate in the form of the institution for one who would choose to participate in it.68 Can we say that sport as an institution possesses the trait of accessibility? It may be thought that opportunity for participation in sport is obviously accessible to everyone in our society. However, I think that a closer look at the multitude of possible constraints that might limit that accessibility is in order. Some of those possible constraints might include organization, facilities, equipment, time, money, transportation, skill, support, geographical location, and social mores.

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66Haworth, L. P. 113

67Haworth on a priori traits P. 113

68Haworth, p. 118

Participation in social institutions is usually thought to be voluntary. However, as Haworth points out, such participation usually involves an underlying coerciveness.69 That is, one may have no real choice as to whether or not to participate in certain institutions. Given the presence of any given combination of those constraints noted above in relation to an individual's choice as to desired participation in sport, actual participation in a specific sport may be informally coerced against the alternative of non-participation.

Competitive sport is elitist. Participation is usually by selection. Participation, in this context, is further viewed as a privilege and not as a right. As participation itself is thought to be a privilege, so too, is autonomy thought to be a privilege. Elitist sport is not autonomy facilitating by criteria of accessibility.

Flexibility

Flexibility refers to conditions whereby "[t]he individual's mode of participation may provide for extensive discretion and personal decision."70 Can we say that sport as an institution possesses the trait of flexibility? I think we can, but not, perhaps for the reasons that one might think. Sport as an institution is flexible in the sense that an individual may choose the particular mode of participation

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69Haworth, P. 118.
70Haworth, p. 114

in that institution. That is, once an individual has chosen to participate in sport, there are a variety of different specific sports in which one may choose to participate. It is important not to confuse flexibility with accessibility. It may be appropriate to note, however, that this flexibility may be reduced in some instances as the variety of specific sports available may be restricted to male sports as opposed to female sports.

Even after an individual has chosen to participate in any given sport, there are further factors to be considered which may constrain individual autonomy in the realm of flexibility. Haworth suggests two types of organizational constraints which appear to apply in this area, prescriptive rules and rules of technique. Prescriptive rules describe the way things are to be done. Depending on the extent and explicitness of such rules, individual autonomy via flexibility may be severely constrained. A detailed discussion of rule types and purposes is not part of this paper but is suggested as an appropriate topic for future study.

Controllability

Controllability refers to "[p]rocedures by which the participants may continuously reshape the institution to reflect their view concerning how it should be set up and function."[71] Can we say that sport as an institution

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[71]Haworth, p. 115

possesses the trait of controllability? I think we can say that participants have opportunity for input into the operation of the institution of sport. However, that opportunity for input is initially discretionary and eventually restricted. Therefore, an overall controllability score on the continuum would be very low.

Haworth suggests that input required may be effected in essentially two ways, participatory democracy and political democracy. This presupposes that only a democratic institution can facilitate individual autonomy. The institution of sport is not generally thought to be a democratic one nor would many think that it should be. Coaches have, traditionally, as well as legally, the ultimate decision authority. The role of a coach in the institution requires that decisions are made by the person in that role and not individual participants. Athlete input via participatory democracy[72] is allowed at the discretion of those who administrate the institutional practices of sport.

The only realistic and consistent opportunity for participant input within the institution of sport itself occurs when players become coaches, managers, or athletic administrators. However, those who become administrators are frequently those who will, and do, perpetuate the existing roles and structure of the institution. Opportunity for

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72Wolff, R. P. In Defense of Anarchism, New York: Harper & Row, 1970, Pp. 34-37.

input via administrative positions is restricted in the number of positions available and the nature of role expectations that accompany the position.

The institution of sport, at least in the West, is frequently thought to exist outside the boundaries of political regulation usually applicable to other social institutions. Although perhaps possible as a long term goal, several institutional barriers must be overcome in order for attainment of participant input via political democracy in sport to occur.

As to the role of the coach it will suffice at this point to note that the coach's approach to sport, specifically the coach-athlete relationship and one's institutional role must be consistent with all those elements of criteria for autonomy which have been described. A more detailed discussion of the role of the coach will be offered in the next chapter on development.

Assessment Checklist

Proposed criteria may be summarily expressed in the form of an assessment checklist as given below. Analysis of participation circumstances according to this list could facilitate recognition of problem areas. Strategies could then be developed to rectify deficiencies.

Table 2. Assessment Checklist

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **The Person** | | |
| Potential Does the individual accept the philosophical position that one actually possesses a realizable potential for making action decisions and subsequently acting on those decisions? | Y | N |
| Competence/a Does the individual possess physical skills required for participation in this activity? | Y | N |
| Competence/b Does the individual possess a developed ability for critical reasoning? | Y | N |
| Constraints/a Does the individual possess at least some degree of internal positive constraints? | Y | N |
| Constraints/b Does the individual possess a lack of internal negative constraints? | Y | N |
| **The Task** | | |
| Choice Does the task allow action as opposed to requiring action? | Y | N |
| Complexity Does the task involve simple skills as opposed to complex skills? | Y | N |
| Time Is the task pursued without reference to a time clock? | Y | N |
| Dependence Can the task be completed individually without reliance on actions or performance of others? | Y | N |
| **The Environment** | | |
| Accessibility Is there sufficient opportunity to participate with required resources? | Y | N |
| Flexibility Does the individual have extensive discretion as to manner of participation? | Y | N |
| Controllable Does the individual influence, on a continuing basis, the manner of operation and regulation of the activity or institution? | Y | N |

Procedure For Assessment

Assessment begins with an initial yes or no response to the question of existence of a given condition. Where definitive responses cannot be given, spaces are left blank in recognition that such conditions may exist in varying degrees. The second step involves identification and substantiation of those degrees by reference to detail descriptions of given elements of the specific criterion. By noting the frequency of yes and no responses, one may get a general idea of the existence of autonomy conditions for a given circumstance. I do not propose a scalar assessment of each item as that method relies heavily on the perception of the assessor. Further, I believe we can identify specific conditions which can be said to either exist or not. Anticipating uses of this checklist in application, it must be noted here that this checklist is not intended for use in generalization studies. The results of an assessment using this list will be applicable only to the situation assessed including the individual person, the participant, involved.

In sum, it may be that individual autonomy in sport participation is, in practical terms, very difficult to achieve. It would follow that discussions of criteria for exercise of such individual autonomy would be essentially meaningless. That is, individual autonomy may have no real meaning beyond those philosophical and psychological concepts noted previously. Individual autonomy in a political sense is severely limited. Such discussion is only

meaningful if it includes input of all individuals of the group in question. I do not think it realistic to claim that all athletes involved in sport participation can, even theoretically, have opportunity for input regarding the nature and operation of the institution of sport. Each individual can, however, influence the particular circumstances of his/her participation provided the relevant conditions for doing so exist. An example assessment is given below.

Assessment of Conditions - Baseball

In applying the criteria to baseball, I cannot with certainty offer any evidence that all people who play baseball accept the notion of potential for individual choice. I would argue, however, that people who participate in baseball do meet all three points noted at least to a minimal degree and perhaps unconsciously. Those basic skills and knowledge of rules and strategy which participants acquire cannot be successfully implemented without some degree of internal constraints in the form of attention to movements of the ball and other players at all times. Nor does such performance have much meaning for individuals without accepting the notion that, while fielding the ball, one may choose to throw the ball to any one of eight other people to pursue goals and objectives of participation.

For task criteria, I proposed comparison to simple, self-paced, closed skills as performed without time constraint or interference from opponents. Basic skills of

baseball, throwing, catching, batting, are simple skills. Throwing is self-paced. Catching is not entirely self-paced, but is not fast-paced. Batting is the most difficult of these basic skills but is still a simple skill and not complex. Time constraints and interference from opponents in skill performance are minimal and there is no time clock. Other than the pitcher who initiates activity, and perhaps the catcher who must respond to the pitched ball, there is no requirement of action for any one on the field. The only required response would occur when a ball is either hit or thrown directly at a person.

For environment criteria, I proposed using elements of Haworth's model given as accessibility, flexibility, and controllability. Although there may be more difficulty today than in years past in finding a lot to play on, I think most anyone who wanted to play baseball in this country could do so. As to flexibility, it seems skill performance decisions are very much under the control of the participant. Where and when to hit, run, and throw are decided by the player at the moment the play is made. The criteria of controllability may be the most difficult to meet and may vary according to the particular circumstance. However, as far as I can offer an assessment of the activity itself here, the criteria of controllability may be met.

In sum, baseball is an activity which, I think, sufficiently meets the criteria for autonomy which have been proposed. Moreover, baseball incorporates all three aspects

of a more comprehensive conception of autonomy as proposed and exemplifies the value of individual autonomy as an essential characteristic of a free society. Participation in baseball provides one of the best opportunities for both expression and development of individual autonomy in sport.

Summary

Chapter five offers a specific proposal of criteria for autonomy in sport participation according to categorical distinctions of the person, the task, and the environment. Elements of persons criteria include potential, competence, and constraints. Task criteria include choice, complexity, time, and dependency. Environment criteria include accessibility, flexibility, and controllability. A checklist describing autonomy conditions for each criteria element is given to facilitate practical application of assessment procedures. A further general assessment is given for baseball which, it is suggested, sufficiently meets the criteria which have been proposed.

The next chapter, then, investigates further application of this criteria towards development of autonomy conditions in sport participation focusing on involvement and influence of a coach in one's sport participation.

## Chapter 6

## Development of Autonomous Conditions

### Introduction

This section investigates means by which proposed criteria may be applied toward development of autonomous conditions of sport participation. The proposed checklist may be used to identify deficiency areas for which correction strategies may then be developed. The table illustrating an overview of criteria elements as given in chapter five can now be expanded to include these aspects of application with the addition of deficiency conditions and correction strategies as illustrated below.

Table 3. Development of Criterion Elements

| Criterion Elements | Considerations | Deficiency Conditions | Correction Strategy |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Person** | | | |
| Potential | Attribution | | |
| Competence | Skill | | |
| Constraints | Impulse | | |
| **Task** | | | |
| Choice | Requirments | | |
| Complexity | Movements | | |
| Time | Clock | | |
| Dependence | Players | | |
| **Environment** | | | |
| Accessible | Opportunity | | |
| Flexible | Control | | |
| Controllable | Change | | |

It is important to note that reference to development does not mean to suggest attention to the participant alone. That is, we are not concerned here with merely developing what we might call an autonomous person, although such might be the eventual goal. We are also concerned with developing autonomous conditions which, according to the proposed criteria, include consideration of other factors, specifically the task and the environment. Conditions for participation must be conducive to both development and expression. Expression involves participating within one's domain of competence. Development involves expanding one's domain of competence. Criteria proposed by previous authors as noted in chapter three as informed consent addressed only the aspect of expression via the political aspect of autonomy, procedural independence. To reiterate, however, a more comprehensive conception of autonomy includes additional philosophical and psychological aspects.

## Intervention

### The Coach

At this point in time it is reasonable to assume that coaches and not athletes would be the ones to initiate procedures proposed herein. In any case, the coach is likely to have the greatest influence on either facilitation or inhibition of such action. Choice of intervention methods and correction strategies by coaches is closely related to, if not dependent upon, some conception of what it means to be a coach. Therefore, let us turn to a consideration of the

role of a coach in development of conditions for autonomous participation. Although a mediative role of the coach was suggested in chapter two, further discussion as to the role of a coach is offered around a critique of one particular article.[73]

The discipline of psychology is currently playing a significant role in defining the concept of 'coaching' in our society. The reason for this is that coaching is usually defined by noting what coaches do; that is, what type of activity they engage in. Specialists in sport psychology have been developing and suggesting new and varied methods and techniques for coaches to enhance performances of their athletes. It is important to note this influence of psychology because of the far reaching ramifications of that trend. A consideration of this influence can be divided into four distinct discussion areas. However, I will only touch on the first three of those areas briefly to provide some background for discussion.

The first area of discussion involves that of the significant position of influence occupied by coaches in our society. There are a large number of coaches in our society. The largest number of coaches are located in community groups and educational institutions. The smallest number of

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73Rychta, T. "Psychology of Training: Philosophical Choices," Orlick, T. et al(Eds), Mental Training for Coaches & Athletes, Ottawa: The Coaching Association of Canada, 1982, Pp. 92-3.

coaches are located in professional groups. The most significant direct affect on people, then, occurs in education and community groups which constitute a large part of our society.

Professional groups only serve as indirect influence in the form of models. The purposes of those groups or institutions, however, are distinctly different. We assume that professional groups provide the best model available. We generally assume further that either there are no alternatives or that any such are not worth considering. The point is that the greater amount of direct, personally influential and significant coaching activity occurs at the community level not at the professional level.

The second area involves the operative model that a large number of coaches follow. The operative model that many of those coaches noted above follow is that of professional sport groups. This is not necessarily an appropriate model for them to follow. It may not even be an appropriate model in itself. It is commonly assumed that the purpose of any and all sport activity is the same. This is a false assumption. The purpose of professional sport activity is definitely not the same as school sport or community sport. Therefore, it seems that means of pursuing those ends might also be distinctly different. The conflict arises in changing from social concerns to educational concerns to economic concerns across different modes of participation in sport activity.

The third area involves the current influence of psychology within those models. The current influence of psychology in the domain of sport activity is that of assuming a primary significance in performance. That is, the psychological state of the athlete is viewed as the major determining factor in performance outcome. The basic scientific principles of biomechanics have long been known. Those principles only need to be learned and applied in appropriate situations, that is, according to the characteristics of the individual and the requirements of the sport. Recently physiological affects and influences of sport performance have been stated in general basic principles that nearly everyone can understand and apply. However, a view currently held by many is that the influence of psychological items on performance is greater and more meaningful than either biomechanics or physiology. The reason for this is that each competitor may be conditioned physiologically and practiced in technique to the maximum of their ability. In competition the participants are frequently evenly matched in this regard. It is currently thought that the one item that decides who produces the superior performance is the psychological state of the individual performer. The difficulty is that there does not appear to be any general basic principles of psychology that may be effectively applied with any consistency of success to all athletes in all situations in sport performance as is the case with either biomechanics or physiology. This state

of affairs seems to be the result of the realization that human beings are not totally determined objects of their environment as was previously held for some years. It follows that new operative models need to be devised to accomodate this view. There are some sport psychologists that advocate psychology as one of the scientific areas of sport performance.74 However, in my view, they fail to provide any general principles. What they do provide is a variety of theoretical alternatives.

The fourth area involves the role of philosophy in that psychological influence noted above. The role of philosophy in the influence of psychology in contemporary sport is illustrated quite effectively by Rychta, as indicated by that author in the opening statement of the article being considered: "My view on the psychology of training is connected with the deepest idea of training itself and its psychological consequences, as it is understood by psychologists and coaches."75 The author continues to state: "Depending upon what kind of definition of training in sport we accept--we will create our own "philosophy of training", and we will ask others(e.g., athletes and coaches) to act according to this "philosophy".76 Rychta begins by noting definitional concerns regarding training. This suggests that there are various definitions of what training is from which

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74Pate, R. R. et al, Scientific Foundations of Coaching, Philadelphia: Saunders College Publishing, 1984.
75Rychta, P. 92.
76Rychta, P. 92.

we can choose one to accept. The choice that we make then becomes what is referred to as a philosophy of training.

I suggest that there really is no problem with a definition of training. In fact, such a definition must necessarily have been already assumed because Rychta is concerned with that definition: "as it is understood by psychologists and coaches"77 Further, I suggest that the author's claim of concern regarding making a philosophical choice of a definition of training is misleading in this article.

Rychta would appear to be asking whether training, in its deepest sense, is either a) that of a person developing or acquiring some certain skills and abilities on their own or b) one person developing some certain skills and abilities in some other person. If we accept 'a' then three things follow. First, the locus of acquisition of skills, responsibility, and discipline lies with the individual athlete. Second, the coach may not be a necessary component of that process. Third, if a coach is part of that process, methods used would emphasize teaching, that is, the transfer of relevant knowledge.

If we accept 'b' then a different set of implications follow. The locus of acquisition of skills, responsibility, and discipline lies with the coach. Second, considerations of the individual athlete's needs, interests, etc., are largely irrelevant to the resulting performance. Third,

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77Rychta, P. 92

those methods used by the coach would emphasize training, that is, the most effective means of producing the desired performance.

Although some might say that an individual can train himself in the acquisition of such items, training is most commonly understood as the process of one individual developing some certain skills, abilities or characteristics in another person. If this were not the case, we would not have coaches in sport. The real concern expressed in this article, then, is that of the role of a coach in the process of training athletes for competition. This means that Rychta is actually addressing methodological concerns of coaching from a philosophical perspective.

Psychology appears to be a natural part of this process. But, there are a variety of methods and techniques available. The matter of which of those methods and techniques to use is the issue of choice which is addressed by Rychta in this article. The philosophical perspective of that choice will, I think, become evident shortly as we review those examples of methods Rychta provides.

Rychta draws from his own experience in stating that: "Nearly every high level coach has his own "philosophy of training" tested in practice and consequently followed in work with his/her athletes."78 This means that each coach has his/her own ideas about what methods and techniques to

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78Rychta, P. 92.

use which, by experience, seem to be effective. It follows that there is a wealth of knowledge about effective methods available. Rychta then notes two main sources of modern psychological knowledge about training in sport. Those sources are psychological research conducted by sport psychologists and coaches' everyday practical experiences. It is interesting to note that there is no mention of the everyday practical experience of the athletes themselves.

Rychta continues to stress the importance of a need for general principles of acquisition of sport skill. He says there is a need: "to create a system of basic concepts, which can be understood by sport psychologists, coaches and athletes...to establish some communication...about training among those people."79 I take this to mean that we should be able to draw on that knowledge which is available in order to accumulate some general basic principles regarding the acquisition of sport skills. However, because each coach has his own way of doing things which presumably works he/she is not likely to change his/her methods very quickly if at all. Therefore, we are presented with the problem of choice in methodology.

Rychta describes what is referred to as the three most common "philosophies" of training encountered in the author's experience as a sport psychologist with high level coaches and athletes. Although specific names or classifications are not given to those various

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79Rychta, P. 92.

"philosophies", the characteristics of those views, as we will see, seem to speak for themselves. First, let us take a brief look at each of those views.

A person holding the first view treats sports training very formally. Sport training is very mechanical and merely a means to develop skills leading to greater levels of performance and technical perfection. This view is not concerned with the athlete having: "a conscious control over one's own body and emotions"80 The athlete is treated as a kind of bio-machine. The emphasis in methods is on bio-chemistry, physiology, and kinesiology. The coach has the most important role as he/she makes all decisions regarding training and performance. This coach frequently uses artificial and harmful ways to increase the athlete's physical endurance. This view favors the principle of 'natural selection'. That is, those who can't take it will quit. The final sport result is the only important item. There is no interest in the athlete's internal psychological problems.

Coaches holding the second view consider training in sport as a process of teaching athletes how to use learned physical skills to achieve their goal. This approach uses cooperative decision-making for developing training programs and performance tactics. There is in the athlete a recognized ability to consciously organize actions to

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80Rychta, P. 92.

achieve short and long term goals. In effect: "The athlete is treated by the coach as a thinking human being".81 Because of the cooperative nature of this approach, the coach-athlete relationship is very important. Rychta's main comment on this approach is encouraging, yet non-commital. He says: "This conception of training has many values but has also some faults coming from a limited way of looking at long term goals, domination in sport, and sociological preferences."82 Coaches holding the third view described by Rychta have the most humanistic view of training in sport. This approach favors self-perfection and self-actualization. The most important factor is all round human personality development which has two aims. Those aims are to improve physical and psychological skills and to discover unlimited possibilities of human mind and body. The athlete is the main figure in this approach. The role of the coach is: "to help athletes create in hard work undisputable cultural values of modern humanity."83 Coaching by this model involves an individual approach which recognizes and emphasizes the individual nature of persons.

Rychta obviously favors the humanistic view of training in sport. This view is more respective of the individual human being as a special separate entity. This view also opens more avenues for psychological research. By this view, also, it seems that there can be no general laws of human

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81Rychta, P. 92.
82Rychta, P. 93.
83Rychta, P. 93.

behavior due to the nature of individuality and individual responses to environmental stimuli. Rychta ends by stressing again the importance of the person over that of the performance as he says: "Sport psychology should not be restricted to the psychology of performance, but should follow the idea of universal development of human personality."84 I began by stating that the discipline of psychology is currently playing a significant role in defining the concept of 'coaching' in our society. The concept of coaching is usually defined by noting what coaches do. Sport psychologists have developed and suggested new and varied techniques for coaches to use. Those methods and techniques have a different philosophical basis than many previously used. By the examples we have briefly reviewed, the influence of changing methods would also effect changes in our conception of other items. Through changes in methods we also change our concept of coaching. That is, we change the role of the coach in the athlete's acquisition of skills. Further, those changes of methods also suggest a rethinking of our concept of training as it is commonly understood. This conceptual shift would define training simply as the acquisition of some certain skills, abilities, etc. by some individual without the necessary intervention of another person.

I do not doubt that this influence of psychology would

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84Rychta, P. 93.

bring about a favorable result. I think also that Rychta would accept such a conceptual shift and, in fact, is attempting to advocate just that type of conceptual shift in his article. However, I think that Rychta fails to do this effectively. Although he points out some interesting philosophical differences in choice of methods, the whole purpose of the article seems to be lost from the start due to the one assumption noted earlier. That assumption is that the coach is not only a useful contributor but is a necessary part of the athlete's acquisition of sport skills.

The article does not address the question of 'how athletes train' but rather addresses the question of 'how we train athletes'. Therefore, the desired conceptual shift in the definition of training cannot be accomplished solely through the influence of changing psychological methods. Although I agree that it is important to question those methods used by coaches, I think that we should go further in our analysis and question the very necessity of a coach in the process of training as that process should be understood which has been done in chapter two.

Although it seems somewhat of a paradox, the only general principle in the psychology of human behavior, identifiable as such, applies to sport coaching, and many other areas of human interaction, as Rychta suggests, in a manner based on one's individual "philosophical 'choice". What is it, then, that makes that choice philosophical? That choice is based on the individual coach's view of the nature

of persons and how they ought to be treated.

Rychta appears to be suggesting that coaches and sport psychologists can provide us with some general scientific principles which will effectively guide that choice. However, given all of the current views, studies, and general acceptance of ideas about the nature of persons, there is still nothing conclusive that can be stated as general laws or principles which would establish any of those views as a science. Allowing individual application of principles precludes the establishment of general laws applicable to all persons. I have been able to discover only one item which would suggest any guiding principle in this regard. That item is that each individual person responds or acts differently in similar situations.

Because of this lack of general scientific principles of psychology, there may not be any one operative model that can be said to be the best, although many take the professional model to be just that. There are, however, alternatives from which to choose. Drawing from implications of the example above, the aspect of choice seems to be an important consideration. The article noted briefly describes three major operative models and their philosophical foundations. The problem, if it can be said to be a problem, is that of which view I choose and why I choose it. That is, if I am going to engage in coaching activity I should have good reasons for doing so. Further, I should also have good reasons for using those means by which I attempt to enhance

any given athlete's performance.

Choice of Method

The coach's approach to intervention and the coach-athlete relation, must be consistent with the notion of autonomy facilitation. This is a necessary precursor to formulation of appropriate correction strategies because the coach is a key element of the sport environment. Recognizing developmental aspects of people we can accept that all people develop in some progressive manner both physically and mentally albeit to various directions and degrees for each aspect for each person. Haworth85 suggests two types of intervention which involve information and suggestion as one approach and command and coercion as an alternate. Mosston86 describes a variety of method alternatives via his spectrum of teaching styles which correspond roughly to the two interventive strategies noted by Haworth. The main features of approaches to coaching described by these three authors may be comparatively illustrated as follows.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Rychta: | 1)mechanistic | 2)co-operative | 3)humanistic |
| Haworth: | command/coercion | information/suggestion | |
| Mosston: | command | | discovery |

I would not want to advocate using one method as appropriate for all situations. I do want to suggest,

85Haworth, P. 196.
86Mosston, M. Teaching Physical Education, Columbus, Ohio: Merril, 1981.

however, that one approach is appropriate for all situations, that which is conducive to autonomy facilitation and development.

Intervention Strategy

Three aspects of autonomy have been suggested as necessary to a more comprehensive conception of autonomy. The same conceptual categories may be applied to the role of a coach. That is, a sport coach may be said to have a political role, a psychological role, and a philosophical role in interaction with athletes. The general method suggested here is that of a system of declining constraints constructed according to these three aspects of the role of a coach and applied to identified deficient conditions. The system is to be applied from the point of entry, the beginning of a given coach-athlete relationship, and is based on assessment of autonomy conditions. The coach then matches various role activities with various identified deficiency conditions in the correction strategies. This process may be illustrated by further expanding the overview chart.(see Appendix A)

Deficient Conditions

For each criterion area and specific element we should identify the deficient condition then propose a correction strategy. There are two major aspects of deficiency conditions and correction to be considered in formulation of correction strategies, information and decision-locus.

Deficiencies which have been identified in all three areas via criteria analysis should be addressed equally. It should also be noted that one ought not assume a need for intervention.

Correction Strategies

Comprehensive correction strategies cannot be offered here due to the variability of particular circumstances. However, some general guidelines may be formulated which can be identified as applicable to all sport situations involving a coach-athlete relationship as discussed in this paper. This can be given via restatement and completion of the overview chart which has been proposed throughout this chapter.

Table 4. Development of Correction Strategy

| Criterion Area: | Person |
|---|---|
| Element: | Potential |
| Consideration: | Attribution |
| Deficiency Condition: | Athlete attributes success or failure inaccurately to other people or things. |
| Correction Strategy: | Point out relevant information to discussion of causal relations. Emphasizing the principle of personal responsibility. |
| Element: | Competence |
| Consideration: | Skill |
| Deficiency Condition: | Athlete is unable to perform required physical skills. |
| Correction Strategy: | Physical practice. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Deficiency Condition: | Athlete is unable to perform required rational decision procedures. |
| Correction Strategy: | Participation and use of analytic procedures;goal setting, strategy development, assessment of consequences. |
| Element: | Constraints |
| Consideration: | Impulse |
| Deficiency Condition: | Unable to control one's inner impulses. Unable to pursue specific goals, or task completion. |
| Correction Strategy: | Investigate appropriate psychological techniques. |
| Criterion Area: | Task |
| Element: | Choice |
| Consideration: | Required vs. Allowed |
| Deficiency Condition: | Initiation of movement is stimulated by external factors. |
| Correction Strategy: | Change activity or position; control initiation for practice. |
| Element: | Complexity |
| Consideration: | Movement Sequence |
| Deficiency Condition: | Completion of skill requires execution of many complex movements, changes of direction, speed, rhythm, etc. |
| Correction Strategy: | Change activity; change progression of task learning; modify task for practice or performance as possible. |
| Element: | Time |
| Consideration: | Time Clock |
| Deficiency Condition: | Skills must be executed within specified time limits. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Correction Strategy: | Change activity; reduce time constraints. |
| Element: | Dependency |
| Consideration: | Individual vs. Team Activity |
| Deficiency Condition: | Completion of skill is dependent on performance of others such as teammates and opponents. |
| Correction Strategy: | Change activity; change league/organization; participate with more skilled athletes. |
| Criterion Area: | Environment |
| Element: | Accessibility |
| Consideration: | Opportunity and Resources |
| Deficiency Condition: | Lack of opportunity to participate; lack of needed resources such as equipment, facilities, funding, etc. |
| Correction Strategy: | Provide opportunity to participate according to both needs and ability; investigate means of acquiring needed resources where possible. |
| Element: | Flexibility |
| Consideration: | Control Agency |
| Deficiency Condition: | Inability to choose particular sport, position, task, strategy, or practice and training procedures; decisions made by others. |
| Correction Strategy: | Provide means of decision input by athletes for team selection, position placement, strategy development, training procedures. |
| Element: | Controllability |
| Consideration: | Change Agency |
| Deficiency Condition: | Inability to influence decision making of organizational and regulative agents. |

Correction Strategy: Provide means of input by athletes for personnel selection, job descriptions, organizational policy, rule changes, rule enforcement, etc.

As noted previously, these are only suggested considerations for formulation of correction strategies for a given criterion area deficiency. There are other factors which will influence application of these ideas including one's perception of the role of a coach or a preferred emphasis in that role, choice of method, and one's own abilities as well as the autonomy status of the coach.

Summary

Chapter six investigates means by which proposed criteria may be applied toward development of autonomous conditions of sport while focusing on involvement and influence of a coach in one's sport participation. The role of a coach is suggested as having the same three aspects as a more comprehensive conception of autonomy which have been proposed as philosophical, psychological, and political. Alternatives for coaching methods are noted as ranging from command style to a discovery style. The general method suggested for deficiency correction is a system of declining constraints constructed according to those three aspects of the role of a coach noted above and applied to deficiency conditions as identified via assessment procedures. A blank worksheet is offered to assist formulation of correction strategies. Although comprehensive correction strategies

cannot be offered due to variablity of particular circumstances, some suggestions are given for each criteria element and corresponding deficiency condition to further assist formulation of correction strategies.

The next, and final, chapter offers a condensed summary and comments on future study in this area.

## Chapter 7

## Summary, Conclusions, and Future Study

### Summary

What I have attempted to offer is an exercise in applied philosophy involving analysis of the issue of individual autonomy as it occurs 'within the context' of sport and a response to criteria which have been proposed to deal with the issue.

Chapter one introduces the issue in terms of a conflict between liberty and authority. A liberty perspective is suggested as more appropriate to not only participation but also to analysis. This is proposed as consistent with both the essence of sport activity which has been referred to as the spirit of play and with the basic tenets of a free society.

Chapter two provides a response to appeals to responsibility and authority which have been proposed to resolve the conflict between liberty and authority in sport. A misperception of the nature and locus of performance responsibility is suggested via confusion of responsibility and accountability. Rather, athletes are proposed as being responsible for performance actions while coaches are proposed as being accountable for performance outcomes. A major problem is identified for coaches relevant to formulation of a coaching philosophy as fulfilling the demands of accountability in a 'position of authority' while

concurrently fulfilling natural demands of fair and just treatment of athletes. It is suggested that a coach's response must be a blend of what is called theory of instruction and philosophy. Through a theory a coach may apply what has been properly justified in a philosophy beginning with a principle of responsibility rather than a justification of authority.

Chapter three offers a re-assessment of the concept of autonomy and its relation to an athlete's participation in sport. This is proposed as a necessary precursor to developing a more appropriate and comprehensive criteria for assessing conditions of autonomous participation in sport. This chapter addresses those aspects of individual autonomy in sport which it is claimed have been largely ignored, the concept itself, value of autonomy, and possibility of autonomous action. Three general categorical conceptions of autonomy are proposed as philosophical, psychological, and political. The philosophical conception emphasizes the notion of potential for choice by individual persons. The psychological conception emphasizes notions of agency and competence in action and skill performance. The political conception emphasizes notions regarding the actual process of decision-making as controlled or influenced by the individual or by some external agent. Of these three conceptions of autonomy, the political conception is identified as prevalent in contemporary organization and operation of sport activity. The value of individual

autonomy has been proposed as realizable in an act which is freely chosen, competently conducted, and which contributes to promotion of shared goals of some group. The possibility of individual autonomy has been discussed by noting possible restrictions as to development or expression. Following on the philosophical notion as to whether each individual has at least the potential for choosing and intentionally initiating action, the psychological and political restrictions include those involving development of ability as a competent agent and actually being allowed to make one's own decisions respectively. In sport, political restrictions are suggested as most prevalent according to existence of a paternalistic operative model. It is suggested that criteria for existence or achievement of individual autonomy are needed in at least three areas in order to give due consideration to a more comprehensive and appropriate conception of autonomy in sport. Those criteria need to be determined for the individual person, the environment, and the specific task in which the person is engaged.

Chapter four offers a response to appeals to informed consent which has been proposed as one methodological technique of resolving the conflict between autonomy and authority in sport. Although informed consent may be an effective starting point for correcting current deficiencies in provision of sport participation opportunities, it is, by itself, insufficient to substantiate claims of allowing

autonomy or justifying exercise of a coach's authority. Further, informed consent addresses only minimal criteria for non-interference of expression. It does not address individual capacity or development. The challenge for coaches is suggested as not to find acceptable ways to allow athletes to agree to subject themselves to controlling influence but rather is to provide task environments which facilitate meaningful development of and increase in capacity for expression of individual autonomy.

Chapter five offers a specific proposal of criteria for autonomy in sport participation according to categorical distinctions of the person, the task, and the environment. Elements of persons criteria include potential, competence, and constraints. Task criteria include choice, complexity, time, and dependency. Environment criteria include accessibility, flexibility, and controllability. A checklist describing autonomy conditions for each criteria element is given to facilitate practical application of assessment procedures. A further general assessment is given for baseball which, it is suggested, sufficiently meets the criteria which have been proposed.

Chapter six investigates means by which proposed criteria may be applied toward development of autonomous conditions of sport while focusing on involvement and influence of a coach in one's sport participation. The role of a coach is suggested as having the same three aspects as a more comprehensive conception of autonomy which have been

proposed as philosophical, psychological, and political. Alternatives for coaching methods are noted as ranging from command style to a discovery style. The general method suggested for deficiency correction is a system of declining constraints constructed according to those three aspects of the role of a coach noted above and applied to deficiency conditions as identified via assessment procedures. A blank worksheet is offered to assist formulation of correction strategies. Although comprehensive correction strategies cannot be offered due to variability of particular circumstances, some suggestions are given for each criteria element and corresponding deficiency condition to further assist formulation of correction strategies.

## Considerations for Future Study

### Procedural Independence

We must resist temptation to rely on a 'traditional' way of doing things in sport because we think it works or is the best or only way to do those things. There are always alternatives where choice exists. Some alternatives may be more desirable than others and those preferences may differ among people involved. We must also deal with the occurrence of undesirable circumstances as they occur. We do not, however, need to advocate that methods used in such instances should be used as a norm for standard operating procedures nor that choices should be limited to the preferences of one person over those of another. The existing 'tradition' of sport is not as stable as we might

think nor is it one that has a great historical background. Rather, I suggest, it is a social construct, a convenient way of doing things that is thought to serve the purposes of those involved. Sport, as an indeterminate and continually changing conception of a mode of participation in human existence is not the kind of thing that should be restricted by tradition, especially in what we might think of as a technologically and morally progressive society. The issue of procedural independence must be dealt with even in the face of appeals to tradition.

Self Control

There are contemporary advocates of self-direction, self-regulation, and self-instruction training techniques.[87] However, there is among these and similar works an assumption noted in this paper of the presence of an interventive agent, a coach, as necessary. The notions of self control and necessary intervention seem to be prima facie incompatible. I question the notion that self control can only be acquired via other control which appears to be an integral part of contemporary notions of what it means to do and learn about sport performance. This is of further

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87For examples see Sarrazin, C. and Halle, M. "Self-Instructional Training: A Cognitive-Behavioral Approach to Psychological Preparation of Elite Gymnasts," in Landers, D.M.(Ed.) Sport and Elite Performers, Chanmpaign, Ill.: Human Kinetics, 1986, Pp. 163-169, and Cox, R. L. "A Systematic Approach to Teaching Sport," in Pieron, M. and Graham, G.(Eds.), Sport Pedagogy, Champaign, Ill.: Human Kinetics, 1986, Pp. 109-115.

importance in that sport is commonly equated with physical education. Future studies in this area are needed which give due attention to appropriateness as well as effectiveness of intervention and interaction between 'self' and 'other' in the use of proposed self-regulation training techniques.

Competence

Competence in sport and physical education is commonly thought of in terms of performing physical skills. Criteria for autonomy as 'informed consent' involves rational assessment of information. Self-regulation and training techniques appear to be dependent upon an individual's rational capabilities. Current notions of competence in sport may be applicable to what is thought to be sufficient notions of human performance as doing certain types of physical tasks. However, these notions are not consistent with notions of development in relation to a broader and perhaps more appropriate conception of human performance as an autonomous person. If sport is to be accorded the importance it apparently is as a model of human excellence and performance, then that model should not be limited to one particular aspect of human competence, physical skills. Accordingly, other aspects of one's sport participation, including teaching and administration activities, should be consistent with this expanded model. We must realize that competence expressed in terms of autonomy involves more than the individual athlete in a particular performance. The surrounding conditions which influence both development and

expression must also be continually evaluated and modified. We need to find ways of assessing performance and competence of others involved in an athlete's performance by means other than referring to the athlete's success in competition. Competence in sport is not limited to the doing of physical tasks by the athlete. Nor is it limited to abilities of others to elicit, develop, or enhance performance of those tasks by the athletes. Future studies in this area need to give greater attention to the meaning of competence and its application to all those people and factors which influence an athlete's participation in sport.

Criteria

Some considerations for future study may also be derived directly from this paper. Studies of self-regulation currently available have been conducted with individual athletes in individual sport activities such as gymnastics. More needs to be done in studying ways of applying a more comprehensive conception of autonomy as discussed to both individual and team sports as noted in chapter three. More needs to be done in the way of determining viability and application of assessment procedures suggested here. As well, ongoing consideration needs to be given to the elements of autonomy and accompanying criteria proposed for expansion of detail or addition of more elements. Future studies in this area should be applied to all levels and/or modes of sport participation and should not be restricted to

elite competitive situations.

Concluding Statement

If, as Veatch88 suggests, autonomy has been sufficiently dealt with and we should move on to consideration of community relations, I would agree that this also is an appropriate move for future studies of sport and physical education. Although such a claim may be true for the medical profession, or community, I believe the same cannot be said for the sport community. There is still much to be done in arguing for and promoting individual autonomy in a more comprehensive conception as discussed in this paper. I also believe that attention to individual autonomy in this way would bring about substantial changes in the sport community. The resulting change would, in my view, provide a more appropriate model of both individual and social excellence which seems to be a major role of contemporary sport. Here I agree with Veatch that more specific studies along this line are due. However, discussions of community should not be separated completely from consideration of individual autonomy. Rather, autonomy might be considered one of many aspects of an appropriate and desirable community, especially for one which claims to be a 'free' society. Coaches are influential agents in the organization and operation of sport and are key figures in

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88Veatch, R. M. "Is Autonomy An Outmoded Value?," The Hastings Center Report, October 1984, Pp. 38-40.

athletic performance via coach-athlete relationships. As such, coaches may be charged with both the responsibility and accountability for developing an appropriate and desirable model of sport for our society as well as for developing people consistent with that model. In this effort, I suggest that, in the words of Karl Popper: "we can do it by defending and strengthening those democratic institutions upon which freedom, and with it progress, depends."89 Attending to the development of individual people through a more comprehensive conception of autonomy can help us make sport one of those democratic institutions. The sport community could become in a broader sense what is frequently claimed for it -- individuals involved in cooperative efforts toward appropriate and beneficial development and application of physical and mental skills and abilities -- the pursuit of excellence.

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89Popper, Karl The Open Society and Its Enemies, Vol. 2, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971, P. 280

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## Appendix A

## Intervention Strategy Development

| Deficient Conditions | Development | Role of a Coach | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Philosophical mediate | Psychological assess | Political allocate |
| Person participant | acquisition of information<br>self discovery | | | |
| Task performance | acquisition of skill<br>object exploration<br>information analysis | | | |
| Environment excellence | application of skill<br>goal selection<br>preference order<br>decision analysis | | | |

Appendix B
Assessment Checklist

## The Person

Potential Does the individual accept the philosophical position that one actually possesses a realizable potential for making action decisions and subsequently acting on those decisions? Y N

Competence/a Does the individual possess physical skills required for participation in this activity? Y N

Competence/b Does the individual possess a developed ability for critical reasoning? Y N

Constraints/a Does the individual possess at least some degree of internal positive constraints? Y N

Constraints/b Does the individual possess a lack of internal negative constraints? Y N

## The Task

Choice Does the task allow action as opposed to requiring action? Y N

Complexity Does the task involve simple skills as opposed to complex skills? Y N

Time Is the task pursued without reference to a time clock? Y N

Dependence Can the task be completed individually without reliance on actions or performance of others? Y N

## The Environment

Accessibility Is there sufficient opportunity to participate with required resources? Y N

Flexibility Does the individual have extensive discretion as to manner of participation? Y N

Controllable Does the individual influence, on a continuing basis, the manner of operation and regulation of the activity or institution? Y N

## Appendix C

### Overview of Criteria Development

**Analysis**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Concept | | |
| philosophical | potential | internal |
| psychological | agency/competence | knowledge and action |
| political | expression | external |
| Value | | |
| philosophical | possibility for free choice | inherent |
| psychological | competence in conduct | mediate |
| political | application to shared goals | consequential |
| Possibility | | |
| philosophical | decision alternatives | |
| psychological | acquisition conditions for agency | |
| political | expression conditions for competent | |

**Criterion Areas**

| | |
|---|---|
| philosophical | person |
| psychological | task |
| political | environment |

**Criterion Elements**

| | |
|---|---|
| Person | |
| potential | attribution |
| competence | skill |
| constraints | impulse |
| Task | |
| choice | required movements; chosen vs. voluntary alternatives |
| complexity | movement sequences involved |
| time | presence of time clock |
| dependence | others involved in skill performance |
| Environment | |
| accessibility | opportunity and resources |
| flexibility | control agency and constraints |
| controllability | change agency and constraints |

**Assessment**

| | |
|---|---|
| Deficient Conditions | identification of autonomy-inhibiting conditions for each criterion area |

Appendix C - continued

Development

Three Aspects

philosophical

person — acquisition of information
self discovery

psychological

performance — acquisition of skill
object exploration
information analysis

political

excellence — application of skill
goal selection
decision analysis

Coaching Role

Three Aspects

philosophical

mediator — exploration of various views
performance expectations
social demands
individual needs and desires

psychological

assessor — assessment of conditions
identification of deficiencies
develop correction strategies

political

administrator — allocation and organization
of opportunities and resources
person objectives
activity objectives
instruction objectives